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# Transmigration

## *A Universal Concept*

# जन्मान्तरवादः

[ सार्वभौमदर्शनम् ]

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# FOREWORD

by

**Shri Kashi Vishwaradhya Jnanasimhasanadhishwar**
**Shri 1008 Jagadguru Dr. Chandrashekar**
**Shivacharya Mahaswamiji**

Nigama and Āgama, both are emanated from God Śiva, so can never be contradictory. Sri Nīlkanṭha Śivācārya, in the first verse of his book Kriyāsāra supports this view.

परस्पराविरुद्धार्थाः शिवोक्ता निगमागमाः।
अल्पबुद्धिभिरन्योन्यं विरोधः परिकल्प्यते।।

Four Vedas, namely Ṛk, Yajuḥ, Sāma, Atharva and the twenty eight Śiva Āgamas right from Kāmuka to Vātula have been revealed by the five faces of Śiva, namely, Sadyojāta, Vāmadeva, Aghora, Jātpuruṣa and Īśāna. These aforesaid Nigamāgamas are the main sources of the religions and philosophies of the Sanāṭana Dharma. The ardent followers of this eternal religion attain the summum bonum of life by adhering to the paths directed by both the Āgamas and the Nigamas. These two parallel streams, of scriptures, though having a somewhat specific approach of their own, point to the same aim of life. The philosophy and religion of Vīraśaivism is specially based on the later portion of Śaivāgamas, as stated by Siddhānta Śikhāmaṇi.

सिद्धान्ताख्ये महातन्त्रे कामिकाद्ये शिवोदिते।
निर्दिष्टमुत्तरे भागे वीरशैवमतं परम्।।

The advice and instructions of Śiva as the Vīraśaiva philosophy have been instituted in the world by the five illustrious saints, namely, Renuka, Dāruka, Ghanṭākarṇa, Dhenukarṇa and Viśvakarṇa. They preached this revelation to the eminent ṛṣis as per the will of the Lord Śiva. So, they are regarded as the founders of the religion of Vīraśaivism, the agents through whom the will of God has been established. The eightfold sheaths – protective aura, i.e., Guru, Liṅga, Jaṅgama, Prasāda, Pādodaka, Bhasma, Rudrākṣa, Maṅtra (Pancākṣara); fivefold ācāras i.e., the Liṅgācāra, Sadācāra, Śivācāra, Bhṛtyācāra, Gaṇācāra as the five righteous dispositions, and Ṣaṭasthalas, i.e., Bhakta, Māheśvara, Prasādi, Prāṇa Liṅgi, Śaraṇa and Aikya – the stages of spiritual attainments are the special features of Vīraśaivism which have been supported by Śaivāgamas.

The concept of transmigration is not only one of the most common features of theistic philosophy of Vedic and Āgamic trend but also of atheistic philosophy like Jainism and Buddhism. The concept is necessarily related to the Law of Karma in Indian thought. Karma begets karma as it is empowered with the force of desire which compels it to get fructified. Each and every action performed with any aim or desire is sure to produce results which the agent will have to bear. Thuṣ the chain goes on. The innumerable desirous actions performed by man have been classified by the thinkers into three categories – (i) Sancita – actions done in the past, whose results will be fructified in the future, (ii) Prārabdha - actions which have already started the result, and (iii) Kriyamān or Sanciyamān referring to the present performance which produces the result in the future. Desires are almost incessantly coming up in mind and cause the results. So, man is bound to take birth repeatedly to enjoy the fruits of his own deeds. Desirelessness is the only remedy. Extinction of the desire from the action is unable to produce any result, just as a fried seed cannot generate a sapling. The Indian philosophy as a whole has dealt with the problem of Karma very consistently and extensively, conjoining it with the concept of transmigration.

I am glad that Jagadguru Viśwārādhya Siṁhāsana, Jangamwadi Math is publishing the book *'Transmigration - A Universal Concept'* authored by Acharya Kedar Nath Tripathi, 'Darshana Ratnam', a retired Professor and Head, Darshana Vibhaga, Faculty of Sanskrit Vidya and Dharma Vijnana, Banaras Hindu University. The writer has covered a wide scope of Indian philosophical systems with criticism on the doctrine. The all-pervasiveness of the soul with the argument forwarded for transmigration has been discussed thoroughly. Then the doctrine has been traced in the scriptures of the Veda, Upaniṣad, Bhagavad-Gītā, along with the philosophical systems of Indian thought propounded by Maharṣi Gautama, Kaṇāda, Īśvara Kṛṣṇa, Patañjali, Jaimini, Vyāsa and also the heterodox systems Jainism and Buddhism. To cover up more he has put forward views of some modern thinkers on rebirth. It is interesting to note that the element of the concept of rebirth has been pointed out in a Semitic religion such as Islam, along with the views of some of the western philosophers. Some discussions relating to interactions with other disciplines such as 'Psychology and the concept of Transmigration', 'Zoology and the concept of Transmigration' and 'Transmigration and the newer theories of today' will attract the attention of thinkers.

I am sure the book will be honoured among the scholars. I wish all success to the learned author and pray for his long life and spiritual attainments to Lord Viśwanātha. May God shower His all Grace on him. Dr. G.C.Kendadamath of the Central Library, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, has constantly extended his valuable suggestions. Shri Chidananda O. Hiremath (Kasgi) has composed the manuscript on the computer. May Jagadguru Viśwārādhya, Lord Viśwanātha and Goddess Annapūrṇā protect them and bestow the Grace.

ॐ शान्तिः ॐ शान्तिः ॐ शान्तिः

* * *

# PREFACE

Since the Vedic age, India has been renowned the world over as the land whose life-force is dharma or righteousness. Dharma is merely a special form of the more generalized karma (action), that is to say, karma may be righteous as well as unrighteous. Among these, righteous action is dharma and unrighteous action is adharma. Righteous action flows as two streams – one responsible for worldly progress, and the other associated with an other-worldly beatitude. It is in relation to dharma that the sage Kaṇāda has written in the Vaiśeṣika Darśana :

यतोऽभ्युदयनिःश्रेयससिद्धिः सधर्मः। इति।

Man however, under the influence of inborn tendencies, is free to make choices with regard to his actions in either direction. Benevolent actions performed on one's own behalf lead also to societal progress. In the same manner, inimical actions such as violence performed to injure others ultimately end up being detrimental to one's own self, in the next life if not in the present one. The principle of transmigration is wholly related to this deterministic relationship between virtuous and sinful actions and their fruits.

Faith in this principle of transmigration serves to inspire all to perform virtuous actions in the current life, be they worldly beings bound by happiness and sorrow, or the wise possessing knowledge of truth. Those who are happy with their present circumstances and hold faith in transmigration continue to stay constantly involved in performing virtuous deeds, thinking that just as the present life is pleasant due to good deeds done in the past, so may the next life be filled with happiness. Similarly, an unhappy person with faith in transmigration wishes to incessantly perform virtuous deeds in the hope that he may not have to experience misery in a future life, as he does in the present due to some misdeed committed in the past. And finally a wise being, motivated by a desire for freedom from the unbearable bondage of the cycle of birth and death and seeking a final emancipation from misery, keeps his distance from all actions that bind.

The principle of transmigration thus serves in every respect to inspire humanity to perform virtuous acts. It is therefore that the contemplative thinkers of India and the world have expounded on the eternal value of this principle, and have made claims on its great benefit for society as a whole as well as for individuals. Thus transmigration is a universally accepted principle and is a central element of every philosophy, having originated in the Vedic literature of India. Keeping in view the eternal benefit of the concept to society as well as to individuals, the universal concept of transmigration has been presented in a summarized form in this condensed book, each aspect of which may indeed be elaborated on in great detail.

The urge to expound on this subject in the form of this book first arose in my heart when, much prior to my arrival in Kāśī, I was employed in a Saṁskṛta College in Bihar, and at a gathering of scholars I had an opportunity to deliver a commentary on the subject of the self as per the Nyāya Darśana. It was in the same period that I had produced a Hindi translation of the famous work by Udayanācārya titled "Ātma Tattva Viveka". But it became possible to publish these works only after my arrival at the Banaras Hindu University.

The Saṁskṛta work 'Janmāntarvādaḥ Sārvabhaumadarśana' was originally published with financial assistance of the Uttar Pradesh Sanskrit Academy, Lucknow in 1985. Next, the Hindi edition of this Saṁskṛta work, titled "Punarjanma Ek Sārvabhaum Dṛṣṭi", was published by JyotirMaṭha, Badrikāśrama under the auspices of the current 1008 Jagadguru Shankaracharya Swami Swarupanandaji Maharaj of the JyortirPīṭha and Dwārkā Śāradā Pīṭha. When I later placed these before the Jñāna Siṁhāsanādhīśwara 1008 Śrī Jagadguru Dr.

Chandrashekhara Shivacharya Mahaswamiji of the Kāśī-based Jangamwadi Math, he expressed his pleasure and suggested the need to publish this work in English. Later on he was pleased to have this published by the Jagadguru Viśwārādhya Siṁhāsana publishing unit of the Jangamwadi Math. It is with the grace of the revered Shivacharya Mahaswamiji that this English edition is being published. I am extremely grateful to him for this. Thus this work of mine has received the blessings of two Jagadgurus, and I consider myself truly blessed in this regard. There is no doubt that with the blessings of Jagadgurus this cultural work will receive the good fortune of wide-spread exposure.

Dr. (Mrs.) Kanak Dwivedi, previously with the Department of Philosophy at the Banaras Hindu University, gladly accepted my request to translate the original Saṁskṛta work into English. She has performed this task with great skill. I wish to express my gratitude to her for her effort.

I am also very grateful to my very intimate Sri Balachander Krishnamurthy for taking the time from his busy schedule to edit this work with skill and care. At the same time, I also wish to offer my blessings to my son, Dr. Vijai Kumar Tripathi, a doctor with the Kāśī-based Ramakrishna Mission Hospital, for contributing in various needed ways for the publishing of this book.

Dr. G.C. Kendadamath of the B.H.U. Central Library contributed his extensive experience in the final stages of publication and successfully brought to its final form in a short time, this offering to Goddess Saraswati. I am extremely grateful to him for this.

Finally, I again express my gratitude to Jñāna Siṁhāsanādhīśvara Sri Jagadguru Shivacharya Mahaswamiji, and I pay obeisance to Sadāśiva Bhagwān Viśwanātha.

Akṣaya Tṛtīyā
2060 V.S.

**Kedar Nath Tripathi**

* * *

# TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

This book, elucidating the concept of transmigration by Pandit Kedar Nath Tripathi has been written with the intention of clarifying doubts and confusions clustering around the subject that forms the bedrock of the religions of Indian origin. Acceptance of this conceptual framework with its wide-ranging corollaries, both at the levels of thought and action, has lent the Sanātana Dharma and its tributaries their specific situational or existential appeal that has been drawing followers the world over for relief and deliverance from pain and suffering.

To restate and relate the idea of transmigration with the present thought currents has been the need of the day. To reestablish the pristine theory with cogent lucidity had always been the objective of the scholars of the glorious classical tradition. Prof. Tripathi belonging to the legion of the present great scholars of India has rightly chosen this subject that might inspire wider dialogue. The translator feels that in the realm of socio-ethical conduct and conviction, much is determined by our outlook towards the questions of transmigration. It mirrors our entire inner make-up as it forms the foundation of our spiritual aspirations and ethical commitments. Our attitude towards the life after death also lays out the details of the procedure or method and means of implementation of our convictions and ideals.

In the world that is witnessing the diabolical hazards of homocentric weltanschauung, a fresh effort to interrelate ourselves to all those far-reaching consequences of our present thinking and action that might not be given to our sense perception directly, should prove fruitful. The idea of transmigration should make one aware of the perspective that is pan universal. One thereby feels accountable not only to one's individual happiness and success but also to all those who have handed down a beautiful habitable world and also to those who will be later witnessing the results of the present misdeeds of the current generation.

This book by Prof. Tripathi might encourage many a sensitive and alert brain to peruse the fundamental ideas of the Vedic Sanātana Dharma and its increasing relevance to the modern world.

**Dr. (Mrs.) Kanak Dwivedi**

* * *

# EDITOR'S NOTE

'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal' – thus goes the inspirational Declaration of Independence of the U.S.A. During my over 15 years of residence in that great land, I had frequent occasion to ponder over this statement. Is it indeed true that all men are created equal? Over the course of years, I had opportunities to observe time and again people born in different circumstances, with different mental capabilities and temperamental tendencies, different physical characteristics, and varying access to available sets of opportunities. Certainly we notice some commonality amongst all peoples. But for the most part, I came to the conclusion that no, all men are not born equal. Indeed, it is evidence of Mother Prakṛti's creative energies that no two men are born exactly alike. A natural question that follows then is - why is this so?

No religion or philosophy has come up with as complete and satisfactory an answer to this question as the Hindu doctrine of the law of karma, with the associated concept of transmigration of the self. As per this view, each man possesses an inner self that is eternal, and a physical embodiment that is transient. On the death of the body, the self takes on a new birth in a new physical body. The circumstances and conditions of the new setting depend on the accumulated set of all past actions in previous lives – good actions lead to happier circumstances, evil actions lead to harsh conditions, perhaps birth in a lower species. This cycle of death and rebirth continues till such time as man finally obtains the knowledge of the illusory nature of this existence. This knowledge leads to escape from this vicious cycle and is termed liberation or mukti.

The concept of transmigration has certainly been conceived of in diverse cultures across the world, though never as rigorously and completely as in Hinduism. The Greeks, in particular Pythagoras, Empedocles and the neo-Platonists held ideas very similar to the Hindu thought. There is evidence that the early Christians believed in it. Similar is the case with the Sufi sects of Islam. The Buddhist Jātaka legends are replete with stories of the Buddha's earlier lives.

In the Hindu epic, the Mahābhārata, Dharamarāja asks Yudhiṣṭhira, 'Of all the wonderful things in the world, what is the most wonderful?' Yudhiṣṭhira replies, 'That no man, though he sees people dying all around him, believes that he will die'. We must remember that we are mere visitors to this world. We are here for a short duration, an instant of a finger-snap as compared to the millions and billions of years that the earth and the universe have supposedly existed. Many among us are haunted by questions such as – 'Who really am I? Where have I come from? Where do I go from here?' Those individuals who seek answers to such questions will find some solace in reading this book.

The author of this work, Acharya Kedar Nath Tripathi possesses in-depth knowledge in the field of Indian philosophy. He has been the head of the Darshana Vibhaga at the Banaras Hindu University. He has numerous philosophical works to his credit, and has received many awards for his contributions in this field from Universities, Saṁskṛta Academies as well as from the President of India. Post his retirement, he continues to be actively involved in his service to Indian philosophy.

This book was originally published in Saṁskṛta in 1985, then in Hindi in 1990, and is now seeing its third incarnation in English. Acharya Tripathi believes deeply in the significance of this work. He has been very eager to make this work accessible to English-speaking scholars and students of philosophy. Many individuals have assisted in this translation effort. Dr. (Mrs.) Kanak Dwivedi translated the original Saṁskṛta work to English. Dr. Vijai Kumar Tripathi of the Ramakrishna Mission Hospital worked on the scriptural references in

Devanāgari script. Dr. G.C.Kendadamath of the Jangamawadi Math offered his experience and support in getting the book published. Mr. Chidananda of the same institution helped out with his desktop publishing skills. Thanks are proffered to all of the above, and especially to Sri Jagadguru Chandrashekhara Shivacharya Mahaswamiji, with whose gracious support this English publication finally came to fruition.

**Bala Krishnamurthy**

* * *

# Key to Transliteration and Pronunciation

| *Symbol* | *Pronounce as in* |
|---|---|
| a | ‘u’: Hurt |
| ā | ‘a’: Father |
| i | ‘i’: Pin |
| ī | ‘ea’: Heal |
| u | ‘u’: Put |
| ū | ‘oo’: Pool |
| ṛ | ‘ri’: Grin |
| e | ‘a’: Mate |
| ai | ‘i’: Hide |
| o | ‘o’: Gold |
| au | ‘ou’: House |
| ṁ | ‘m’: Humpty |
| ḥ | 1/2 ‘h’ |
| k | ‘K’: Kite |
| kh | ‘kh’: Mikhail |
| g | ‘G’: Girl |
| gh | ‘g-h’: Fog-horn |
| ṅ | ‘ng’: Ring |
| c | ‘Ch’: Child |
| ch | ‘th-h’: Fetch-him |
| j | ‘J’: Joke |
| jh | ‘dgeh’: Hedgehog |
| ñ | ‘y’: Cheyenne |

| *Symbol* | *Pronounce as in* |
|---|---|
| ṭ | ‘T’: Tall |
| ṭh | ‘ght’: Might |
| ḍ | ‘d’: God |
| ḍh | ‘dh’: Godhead |
| ṇ | ‘Kn’: Knight |
| t | Spanish t |
| th | ‘th’: Earth |
| d | ‘th’: Feather |
| dh | ‘Th’: Thus |
| n | ‘N’: Nose |
| p | ‘P’: Pot |
| ph | ‘p-h’: Loop-hole |
| b | ‘B’: Bite |
| bh | ‘bh’: Abhor |
| m | ‘M’: Must |
| y | ‘Y’: Yet |
| r | ‘R’: Rub |
| l | ‘L’: Love |
| v | ‘v’: Live |
| ś | ‘Sh’: Shell |
| ṣ | ‘Sh’: Shut |
| s | ‘S’: Side |
| h | ‘H’: Hull |

Diacritical marks have been applied to all ancient Indian terms and names. Diacritical marks have not been applied to terms and names in popular usage in modern times.

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* * *

# TRANSMIGRATION

## (A Universal Concept)

*By*

*Acharya Kedar Nath Tripathi*

## *Objective*

The Chāndogya Upaniṣad in the first canto of the sixth chapter describes the episode of Uddālaka and his son Śvetaketu. There it is said that Uddālaka, the son of Aruṇā, instructed the twelve-year old Śvetaketu to study the Vedas while observing brahmacarya (celibacy). There had been none in his entire lineage who had not studied the Vedas and so Śvetaketu too, respectfully abiding by his father's wishes, went away to the gurukula to study. Twelve years later at the age of twenty four, having completed the study of all the four Vedas, he returned home filled with the arrogance of being all-knowing. Noticing this, Uddālaka inquired of him,

> उत तमादेशमप्राक्षी:? येनाश्रुतं श्रुतं भवति,
> अमतं मतम्, अविज्ञातं विज्ञातमिति?।
>
> [छान्दोग्योपनिषद् ६.१.३]

*Did you receive that teaching, by which the unheard becomes heard, the unperceived becomes perceived and the unknown becomes known?*

Śvetaketu was unable to answer and finally Uddālaka himself, citing several examples, explained to his son that knowledge of the self which when realized makes all as heard, perceived and known.

In exactly the same manner, the principle of rebirth is likewise that central theme of understanding which reveals not only the mystery of spiritual views but also that of natural and supernatural, ancient and modern theories. To elucidate this principle with clarity in the following discussion is the chief objective of the present work.

## *Definition*

After death, the reunification of the self with the body, sense organs, vital élan and the mental organ is called rebirth. In other words, it may be said that union of this kind is birth, and dissolution or separation of these elements alone is death. In the term '*rebirth*', the prefix '*re*' is indicative of the cycle of birth and death phenomena that has been in progress since time immemorial. This very meaning is conveyed in the use of the term saṁsāra by the learned scholars of the scriptures, indicating the transient nature of all creation. The same sense is also expressed in the following aphorisms from the Nyāya-Darśana [Nyāya system of thought] of Maharṣi Gautama and the Vaiśeṣika-Darśana of Maharṣi Kaṇāda.

पुनरुत्पत्तिः प्रेत्यभावः

[न्याय अ.१ आ.१ सू.१९]

तत्संयोगो विभागः

[वै.द. अ.६ आ.२ सू.१५]

These aphorisms clear any confusion that consciousness too comes into being as a byproduct of some natural course through which the body, senses and mind are produced. Further, they remove the uncertainty as to how those who believe in the eternality of the self can believe in its creation or destruction through birth and death. The reason – all orthodox systems of Hindu thought (i.e., those believing in the sanctity and authority of the Vedas as revealed scriptures) believe that the self is eternal and omnipresent, while the body, sense organs and other newly formed physical elements continually get associated and disassociated from it. These changing states alone are known as birth and death. Taking the example of electrical energy, we see that though it is existent everywhere, it becomes manifested or captured through specialized equipment only, and becomes unavailable in their absence. Fire, to cite another example, exists in the match stick or dry wood, but is expressed or manifested only when friction is applied. In the same manner, when the eternal self comes in contact with the body, senses etc consciousness too gets manifested, and it disappears when these elements get scattered. This theme will be further clarified in following sections.

## Verification of the Principle

It may be stated without the slightest doubt that the principles propounded by the ancient sages within the ancient systems of philosophy were not done so through mere autocratic statements – rather they were subjected to and thoroughly established through the pramāṇas or means of valid knowledge. These theories, therefore, cannot be ignored as a mere figment of their imagination.

प्रमेयसिद्धिः प्रमाणाद्धि

[सां.का. ४]

The above aphorism firmly asserts that anything can be established only through the pramāṇas. The sages themselves understood clearly that unproven statements are ignored by society as are the words of lunatics. Therefore it is necessary to thoroughly verify anything through the pramāṇas or means of valid knowledge such as perception and inference prior to establishing any theory as true.

## Pramāṇas (means of valid knowledge) and their utility

The Nyāya-Darśana accepts 4 means of valid knowledge – *pratyakṣa* (perception), *anumāna* (inference), *upamāna* (analogy) and *śabda* (valid verbal testimony, including scriptures and the words of trustworthy people). Those objects that make direct contact with the sense-organs may be known through pratyakṣa pramāṇa or perception. Those objects that are not perceived directly may be known by drawing conclusions based upon their common denominators, and this is anumāna or inference. To cite an example, the fire on a mountain may be inferred by seeing the smoke coming from it. Or as another example, on seeing the creations in the world one infers the existence of their creator, the omniscient Lord or Īśvara.

The next means of cognition is upamāna or analogy. We may take the example of the forest-dwelling animal Gavaya which belongs to the bovine family. One who has not seen it, but has heard of its likeness with the cow from a forest-dweller familiar with it, recognizes it immediately on seeing it for the first time in the forest. This knowledge is arrived at with the help of the upamāna pramāṇa. Finally, when an unknown entity is known through the words of a trustworthy person, the śabda pramāṇa is being applied.

In addition to these four, the Mīmāṁsā and Vedānta Darśanas accept two more means of valid knowledge – arthāpatti (postulation) and anupalabdhi (non-apprehension). The authors of the Purāṇas add another two to this list – saṁbhava (equivalence) and aitihya (legend). This list of eight is reduced to four by the followers of the Nyāya system who consider arthāpatti and saṁbhava to be included within anumāna, anupalabdhi within pratyakṣa and aitihya within śabda. The list is further reduced to three means of valid knowledge by the followers of the Sāṁkhya and Yoga Darśanas, who consider upamāna to be included within anumāna. The Vaiśeṣika system goes a step further by placing śabda in the anumāna category, thus accepting only pratyakṣa and anumāna as valid. Though the classification of the means of valid knowledge may have been done in various ways by the different systems, yet there is no real difference in their actual position. It is only the Cārvākas (materialists) who exhibit a striking difference by accepting perception as the sole means of valid knowledge, thereby expressing their gross materialistic nature to civilized society.

Amongst the aforesaid means of valid knowledge, the particularly significant ones from the perspective of ordinary usage are perception, inference and verbal testimony. Hence we shall be examining only these three in our discussion of transmigration.

It is only by the above pramāṇas that the truth behind any statement can be ascertained. Yet it is important to keep in mind that the statement does not have to be proven by all the pramāṇas collectively. In the absence of direct perception the truth behind a statement can be verified by inference or verbal testimony too. Just because an object is not apparent to our organs of perception, it cannot be said that it is non-existent. The stars are not visible during the day, but does that mean that they do not exist? Does not the sun appear the size of a small plate despite being over a million times larger than the earth? Are all objects seen by someone suffering from jaundice truly yellow as they seem to appear to him? Or if my mind was occupied and missed noticing an individual passing by, does that mean that the person's passing by was unreal? If one cannot see the mascara on one's eyelashes due to its extreme proximity, does that mean it is not there? Or if it is seen in a mirror and inferred, or heard of while being mentioned by another person, should that be taken as falsehood?

The conditions in which direct perception lacks power in making valid determinations have been stated in the Sāṁkhya Kārikā as follows:

अतिदूरात् सामीप्यात् इन्द्रियघातान्मनोऽनवस्थानात्।
सौक्ष्म्यात् तद्व्यवधानादभिभवात् समानाभिहाराच्च।।
[सां.का. ७]

This list identifies the following circumstances in which the organs of perception lack power – when an object is too far, or too close; when the sense organs are defective, or when the mind is distracted; when the object is too small, or when a veil covers it; when it is pushed to the background due to the presence of an intensely radiant object, such as occurs to the stars during the day in the presence of the sun; or when it cannot be distinguished from nearby objects due to their similarity, such as in the case of droplets of water in clouds or in the oceans. Yet, all of these objects are real.

## *Anumāna and Śabda are as necessary as Pratyakṣa*

The foregoing discussion makes it clear to the reader that when direct perception lacks power in determining the validity of an object, the assistance of inference and valid verbal testimony are needed. Despite this, there are some who view direct perception as the sole means of knowledge and therefore do not accept the theory of transmigration which is proven by inference and verbal testimony. To such people many questions from our daily behaviour may be asked. For example, we find that many men go to far off places for some business leaving their wives and families behind. But they are not taken to be dead even when they are not being seen by the family. No one wails and cries for them. In fact, a simple post card is sufficient to brighten up their faces. As another example, can such people who believe solely in direct perception as the means of valid knowledge say for sure that those who they view as their fathers are truly so? This question can be answered only in the negative. They have to have faith in the words of their mothers. Thus those ancient and modern Cārvākas who had faith only in direct perception have also to take the help of inference, and have faith in the words of Mother Śruti (the Vedas). They have to bear in mind that a mother does not deceive her children. This is the reason that a mother's words are trustworthy for her son.

In the same manner, the instruction of the Śruti is for the goodwill of the entire world and without any vested interest.

Therefore they are trustworthy in every way. It is seen in the world that only those people who have some vested interest propagate false teachings, but this is not the case with the Śruti. Indeed they are totally indifferent to any personal motivation. The justifiability of the Śruti as means of valid knowledge will be clarified further later when the theory of transmigration is established on the basis of Vedic statements. Till then, the theory of transmigration will be established on logical and rational criteria which we term as inference.

## *Cārvākas (materialists) and the theory of transmigration*

Let us first acquaint ourselves with the reasons as to why the theory of transmigration was rejected by the Cārvākas. Indeed, accepting the theory would amount to accepting its logical corollary – *the law of karma* which makes one a prey to the consequences of one's actions. Certainly it would restrict their unrestrained freedom. Thus putting aside the thought that they would have to answer for their present licentious actions in a future life, they spend their lives doing as their minds please. This is their intent. The ślokas or stanzas quoted below offer an insight into the thinking of the Cārvākas:

न स्वर्गो नापवर्गो वा नैवात्मा पारलौकिकः।

[सर्वदर्शनसंग्रहः चार्वाक दर्शन]

*There is neither a heaven, nor liberation, nor an (immortal) self nor any association with any other world.*

यावज्जीवेत् सुखं जीवेद् ऋणं कृत्वा घृतं पिबेत्।
भस्मीभूतस्य देहस्य पुनरागमनं कुतः।।

[सर्वदर्शनसंग्रहः चार्वाक दर्शन]

*As long as one lives one should live a comfortable life, even borrow to enjoy life's pleasures. After all, once the body dies, it is not as though one returns in order to pay off the debts.*

अङ्गनालिङ्गनाजन्यं सुखमेव पुमर्थता।
कण्टकादिव्यथाजन्यं दुःखं निरय उच्यते।।

[सर्वदर्शनसंग्रहः चार्वाक दर्शन]

*The pleasure that comes from being caressed by young women is the ultimate goal of life while the pain such as that arising from the prick of a thorn alone is hell. Other than these, there is no heaven or hell.*

This is the fundamental outline of the Cārvāka thinking. Though these couplets are quite old, yet even today echoes of the Cārvāka philosophy can be heard among modern people educated in the materialistic pattern of physical sciences. Such people hold considerable influence in today's society, and why not? Their theories are pleasing and appealing to the natural inclinations of people. Large sections of society are mentally at a low level. Today, people's attention is limited strictly to the events that occur in their life span, and thinking about events that may have occurred prior to their birth is considered a waste of time. This is indeed gross atheism. Now we shall arrive at our main topic.

## A critique of some other views on the self

The Cārvākas hold that the consciousness experienced within our bodies is not caused by some self that is separate from our bodies; rather, the conscious body comes into being through a peculiar mixture resulting from the coming together of the elements such as the earth, water, fire, air, etc. It is often seen that amazing forms of energy appear through the mixing up of different chemical elements. The conscious self is similarly nothing but an extension of biological existence alone. It was not here before the birth of the body, nor will it last after the body's death. In this situation, who is there that remains to be reborn? This being has been born absolutely new, and all of its activities will stop after death when the body has been burnt to ashes.

Among such people who lack faith in the Vedas, there are those who consider the sense organs to be the self. They say that life exists as long as the sense organs function. Therefore the sense organs alone are the self, and these too have nothing to do with rebirth. Among others, some believe that the mind alone is the self, while still others believe that the self is nothing but a stream of consciousness consisting of momentary impressions. There are thus several views on the nature of the self. While those who take the self to be eternal value the principle of transmigration, the following discussion is directed at those others who view the transient body etc. to be the self.

## *Refutation of the theory of the mind as the self*

The mind can not be considered to be the self, as it is merely an internal organ that allows one to experience happiness and sorrow, pleasure and pain. It is thus simply an instrument for experiencing these feelings. The agent who actually experiences these emotions is someone other than the experiencing instrument, and is the true self. Even one who considers the mind alone to be the self has to acknowledge the existence of the two separate elements, the one who experiences and the instrument of experience, the mind. Besides, one who considers the mind to be the self has to believe that the attributes of the self such as happiness and sorrow, desire and jealousy and knowledge etc, reside in the mind itself. In this state one will not be able to directly perceive the feelings that one has, the reason being that the mind is infinitesimal in nature. One does not directly perceive miniscule substances, as is the case with the subtle elements. The attributes of those elements that are themselves infinitesimal can never be perceived. Therefore, it would be illogical to accept the mind as identical with the self.

## *Refutation of the sense-organs as the self*

The theory that takes the sense-organs to be the self is as fallacious as the previous theories that took the body or the mind to be the self. The reason is, it is through the sense-organs that the self that is different from them is established, and therefore they themselves can not be the self. The eyes, tongue, nose, ears and skin, these five sense-organs are correspondingly the instruments of perceiving sensations of form, taste, smell, hearing and feeling. To have any of these sensations is an activity that requires an instrument to perform it. In our daily activities we also see that the instrument for any activity is directed by a conscious agent. For example, cutting wood is an activity, a saw is an instrument for cutting wood, and it is directed by a carpenter. Without the carpenter the saw cannot by itself cut the wood. In the same manner, perception of forms, tasting various tastes, smelling aromas, hearing sounds and feeling the touch of hot objects etc. are activities for which the eyes, tongue, nose, ears and skin are correspondingly the instruments. Therefore these too need a conscious agent in order to function. This conscious agent is the self. This is how we establish the separate existence of the controller of the sense-organs which is the self.

Besides this, there are other shortcomings in the position that takes the sense-organs to be the conscious self. In childhood or youth, all the sense-organs are strong and healthy and perceive various kinds of objects. When these senses develop some defect or grow weak due to advancing age, they are no longer capable of watching or listening as before, but still they recall perfectly well the previously seen or heard objects. If the sense-organs alone were the self, this recollection from memory of the objects seen or heard earlier would not occur. The reason is that the instruments of seeing or hearing, namely the eyes and ears have been damaged. If someone were to suggest that the other sense-organs are still healthy and are the means of recollection, this too would not be acceptable as the rule below indicates."

नान्यदृष्टं स्मरत्यन्यः

[न्याय कुसुमांजलि १.१५]

According to this rule, whatever is experienced by one sense-organ cannot be recollected by another. This proves that besides the sense-organs there is certainly a conscious self which retains all the impressions of objects seen and heard, and is also able to recollect these even when a particular sense-organ becomes weak or defective.

It is often seen that merely seeing a sour fruit or food item causes saliva to gather in the mouth. It is understandable that the mouth salivates when there is actual contact between the tongue and the sour object, but what might possibly cause the saliva to gather in the mouth even when there is no such contact, merely on viewing the object? This definitely requires one to accept the existence of a self that is different from the sense-organs, which from the mere sight of the sour object and without its actual contact with the mouth is able to make the mouth water due to the recollection of a prior such experience.

We may take another example to prove the same proposition. If we see something with the left eye, keeping the right eye closed, and then view the same object with the right eye keeping the left closed, we immediately recognize it as the object seen the first time. The previously listed rule '*Something perceived by one cannot be recollected by the other*' holds good here too. So how does the other eye remember the item seen by the first? This also serves to prove that besides the sense-organs there is a self in this body which keeps a record of all things experienced and remembers them on special occasions.

Here a doubt may be raised that the above justification is valid only when there are indeed two separate eyes. The doubt occurs from the misunderstanding that there are not two but only a single eye, separated by the nose and seeming to be two, just as a lake that is really one may seem to be separated into two by a over-bridge running across. Therefore, the doubt-raiser suggests, there is only one eye that both sees and recollects.

But the above doubt is not valid. If it were so, then on one eye becoming defective, a person would become sightless, or else be able to see half of what he was able to see before. But this does not happen. The above arguments thus establish that the sense-organs are not the self.

## *Refutation of Vijñānavāda (Momentary Subjective Idealism)*

The theory of idealism based on the momentary-ness of subjective knowledge has been propagated by the Buddhists. According to this view the momentary impressions of knowledge received by a person are alone what constitute the self. As these are short-lived, so is the self momentary and short-lived. According to this view, one cannot say how many thousands of selves are born and die daily. Leaving aside years, months and days, one should even not be able to recollect what occurred only a few moments back, since the self which was the momentary impression died with the passing of the impression, and the one who wishes to remember is another self that was born later. The rule that one who experiences and the one who remembers cannot be two different entities, holds good here too. To those who endorse the momentary-ness of the self the question is put forward as to how they are able to recollect their own past experiences. Thus, this view may be ignored as being absolutely without justification.

## *Refutation of the body as the self*

Let us now examine the view that takes the body or the physical existence alone as the self. Those who are of limited intellect believe that the physical body, from the head to the toe, is alone the self. The first question they should be asked is why the body, if it is indeed the self, does not retain consciousness after death. Why does not the dead body too walk and talk like a living being? The next charge against them is that each organ or rather each cell of the body is constantly dying and being replaced by new ones, and thus the body that one had in childhood is not the same as the one in youth. In such a case the experiences of childhood should not be remembered in youth, as the past body that experiences was different from the one now trying to remember. Along the same lines, the third charge against such people is that according to their thinking, any one who commits crimes will not be punished. For example, if a murderer were awarded the death penalty by hanging, the question arises as to who is hanged ultimately. Given the continuously changing nature of the body and its components, the one who sinned is no longer there to receive the punishment. If the later form of the body which is innocent is executed, then the one conducting the execution is equally a murderer and should also receive the death penalty. But this will continue in endless regress. This is what is known in the scriptures as kṛtanāśa, akṛtābhyāgama and anavasthā doṣa (errors). As a result of the above objections, it would be incorrect to accept the body as the self that bears the fruits of its actions.

It is also seen in daily behavior that all the things that are assembled together are meant to be utilized by some other person. For example, a bed, furniture, vessels for food and water, etc. are for the use of someone else, and not for themselves. The bed is not for the bed itself, the chair is not for the chair itself, rather they are for the person who will sit or sleep on them. In the same manner the collection of the body, sense organs, intellect and the vital élan are not for themselves but rather for being used and enjoyed by someone different from them. And that other entity is the self. As it in turn is not an assemblage of other components, it is not meant for the use of some other being. Thus the self is not an object for the enjoyment of some other being, but rather exists for its own enjoyment. The self is without any constituent elements and it is only assemblages that are for others' usage.

Perhaps one might say that there is no entity (such as the self) which is not an assemblage. Then following the logic that the body is an assemblage meant for another entity's use, and that other entity is also part of an assemblage meant for a third entity's use and so on, this would lead to ad infinitum which is nothing but an absurd position. Thus in the absence of any other option, we ought to accept an elemental self that is the final experiencer of all the fruits of actions. To think that there is no elemental entity may prove preposterous, as any compound entity presupposes the existence of elemental entities. If there were no noble people we would have no basis for calling any others ignoble. This proves that there is an elemental self which is different from compound entities such as the body and other physical objects.

Well gentlemen! The foregoing arguments have proved the existence of the self that experiences the fruits of actions such as happiness and sorrow. As an underlying substratum, it sustains all knowledge and is different from the physical body, sense-organs and the mind.

## *The all-pervasiveness of the self*

The self is not infinitesimal in size. Had it been so, it would have been present only in one part of the body. Then one would not be able to experience the sensations of coolness or heat across the entire body, as the miniscule self could not be present across all parts of the body. If the self were considered to be so miniscule then the experiences of happiness or sorrow wouldn't be our own. This point has already been discussed while refuting the possibility of taking the mind as the self. It has also been expressed in the Vibhūti section of the Yoga-Darśana that the yogīs, through yogic powers, can be present in multiple bodies projected out of themselves and have different experiences simultaneously. This is possible only when the self is not infinitesimal, rather it pervades all the self-projected bodies. The only way to convince those who are skeptical about such miracles and lack faith in the Yoga aphorisms of Maharṣi Patañjali, is to ask them to spend some time in the company of advanced yogīs and experience such miracles for themselves. It is not possible to prove it by citing some incidents or offering logical arguments.

Another position regarding the size of the self may be that it is of medium size, similar to the physical body. This position is again faced with the problem of non-eternality, which brings up the untenable states of kṛtanāśa doṣa (works which though completed have not yielded their results) or akṛtābhyāgama doṣa (bearing results without having performed the associated actions). Its criticism has already been discussed in the section on the refutation of the body as the self, and therefore does not need repetition. Thus it may be concluded that the self is all-pervasive and not infinitesimal or medium in size.

Now the doubt may be raised that if the self is indeed all-pervasive, then why is that conscious activities such as walking, talking, perceiving etc. are limited to the physical body? These activities should be present in a clod of earth too. Here one needs to give consideration to whether such activities occur only because of the self, or whether there are some other body elements also involved. The straight fact of the matter is that the body includes the mind as well as the five organs of perception and the five organs of action, which individually serve as the instruments for the various perceptions and actions. The clod of earth, on the other hand, while it is pervaded by the self, lacks the necessary instruments for the above activities. Let us consider for example, an earthen pitcher, which requires a conscious agent, the potter to create it. But the sole involvement of the potter is not sufficient to create the pitcher. He still needs other materials such as clay, water, the wheel, the stick and the rope, etc. In their absence, his consciousness alone is not enough. In the same manner, it should not surprise us that the self needs the various sense and action organs in order to create and support the various activities such as walking, talking, etc. The clod of earth, lacking the necessary organs of perception and action, is therefore unable to perform the activities in spite of the all-pervasive self.

Let us touch upon an example that is closer to us. Despite possessing a conscious self, why is it that a lame person cannot walk? The answer is that it is he possesses no legs. In the same manner, a blind person cannot see because of the lack of functioning eyes. A deaf person does not hear because his ears do not function. A person in deep sleep is unaware of events around him, because the mind that receives impressions normally has moved away from its regular residence into the nerve known as purītat. Thus, we have our answer - the clod of earth lacks all these instruments of perception and action, therefore it is unable to perceive and act.

Among living creatures, it is only humans, animals and birds that possess all the sense organs. Others do not possess all such organs. The snake, for example, lacks the organ of hearing. In the Saṁskṛta language, it has been given the name Cakṣuḥ-Śrava, meaning [figuratively] '*That which hears with its eyes*'. Creatures such as some insects that reside in the soil possess only the sense of touch. To summarize, we may describe the situation as follows. All creatures of the world possess the sense of touch. Humans, animals and birds possess all the sense-organs. When a creature of any species is unable to speak, one should understand that it is because it lacks the organs of hearing. The organ of hearing is very closely related to the organ of speech. Hearing a bird chirp, other birds too begin to chirp. Or a bird may begin to chirp in order that others may hear. Thus it appears that only those creatures that can make sounds have the sense of hearing. Noticing the snake making sounds despite not having the sense of hearing, the ancients attributed the sense of hearing to its eyes and assigned it the name '*That which hears with its eyes*'. Creatures such as ants that, despite lacking the sense of hearing, work within a collective social group may be assumed to possess the organ of sight as they cannot move in a queue without the power of sight. It is only zoologists that can shed complete light on this issue. The main point being expressed here is that the capacity of a creature to perceive is a direct function of the number of sense-organs it possesses. These sense organs are lacking in the clod of earth or in stones and therefore they are unable to perceive anything.

Thus there should not be any objection to accepting the self as being all-pervasive. In the foregoing we have tried to prove the self on logical grounds and also describe its nature. In the following section an endeavour will be made to explain the idea of rebirth that occurs after the body's death in accordance with one's deeds. It will first be established through logic and then later by the testimony of the Vedas and other means of valid knowledge.

## *Arguments supporting transmigration*

Some Cārvākas with modern education have raised the doubt that yes, perhaps a self exists and stays with the body as long as the body is alive, but what proof is there that the self continues to exist after the death of the body? Their implication is that the self does not take up a new body after leaving the first one. They say that if it were so, then just as the self in this body is able to recollect all events that occurred since childhood, in the same manner it should be able to recollect the experiences of the previous birth too. But this does not happen, and therefore it is extremely irrational to believe in the eternality of the self and in its transmigration.

The reply to this argument is that such doubters have not been properly trained to fend their own position. They need to explain how it is that the self also gets destroyed when the body dies. If the self were also a compound object like the physical body it would get destroyed at death on the funeral pyre. But the self is a non-composite entity and cannot be destroyed by a fire or any thing else. That which cannot be destroyed by any means is eternal. An eternal being can leave one body and enter another, and thereby transmigration becomes self-evident.

It is seen that a newborn child sometimes laughs, sometimes cries and sometime trembles with fear. What does all this convey? One may understand that just as we laugh, cry or tremble due to our inner feelings of happiness, sadness or fear, in the same manner the newborn baby does so because of its inner feelings. The emotion of happiness arises due to coming into direct contact with something pleasant, or from the memory of a previous such pleasant occasion. Similarly, sadness arises due to coming into contact with something unpleasant, or from the memory of such an event. One may now consider the fact that such a child has had no time to realize or experience that certain objects lead to pleasure or that others lead to sadness, in order that seeing them would make it laugh or cry. It is therefore our submission that despite the child not having had such experiences, it presently recalls certain past experiences which make it laugh or cry. And since the new born child has not yet had any experiences in this life, one has to accept that it is from the memory of experiences of a past life that a new born baby laughs or cries. This also proves the occurrence of transmigration.

An objection may be raised that just as a lotus blooms at times and then contracts without any apparent reason, in the same manner a baby's countenance may express joy or sadness without cause. It need not have any connection to transmigration. The answer to this objection is that the lotus blooms not spontaneously but by the touch of the sun's rays. This is what we always notice. Similarly, a child's laughter is not spontaneous, rather when through some stimulus he is reminded of some past pleasant experience, his self is filled with joy and his face beams with happiness. And one has to accept that such experiences are from a past life. It is to be borne in mind that no activity occurs in the world without cause. This fact has been expressed by Jayanta Bhaṭṭa in the Nyāya Mañjarī as follows:

तस्मान्मुखविकासस्य हर्षो हर्षस्य च स्मृतिः।
स्मृतेरनुभवो हेतुः स च जन्मान्तरे शिशोः।। इति।

[न्याय मंजरी प्रमेय प्रकरण]

*The delighted face of the child is due to its happiness, which arises from a memory of a past experience. As the experience can not be of this life, it has to be from a previous one.*

It is also known that soon after a child is born, an urge rises within it to drink milk. It expresses this urge by leaning towards its mother's breasts. The reason for this too is that it recalls from its experience in a past birth that drinking milk satisfies its urge, and that this milk lies in the mother's breasts. This too establishes the existence of rebirth.

Now it may be said that just as it is natural for a piece of iron to be attracted towards a magnet, in the same manner a baby is attracted towards its mother's breasts for no explicit reason. But on looking deeper one sees that the attraction of the iron towards the magnet is not without cause; rather it is because of the force of magnetism prevalent in the magnet. If the attraction were without cause, then the iron object should be attracted to all other objects too. Similarly, a baby's attraction towards its mother's breasts does have a cause behind it. The difference here is that unlike the magnet the milk does not have any special physical force of attraction. One thus has to accept that the child, due to its latent tendencies from time immemorial, sees the breasts as a source of nectar and a means of satisfying its hunger, and accordingly moves towards it.

Next the question may be raised that if the baby's smiling face and it's being drawn to its mother's breasts are due to latent impressions associated with experiences from a past life, then should not everyone recall all the experiences of past lives? But before we reply to this objection we too may ask if it is possible for the questioner to recall all the events of his current life in the correct sequence. If it were so, could he please tell us what he did on the 3rd of July, 1940, where he went and what he ate? It is certain that a satisfactory answer cannot be given to such a question. All sciences accept that no recollection is possible without an appropriate stimulus. If one sees something belonging to an acquaintance, it immediately brings about a recollection of that person. This is the experience of every person. We thus understand that when the reminding factors of any event come in front of us, we are reminded of those events, and not otherwise. This reply holds good for the above objection too. The memory of all events of previous lives does not occur as the reminding factor is missing or lacking in power. The baby's leaning towards its mother's breasts is due to its feeling of hunger and the power of the associated reminding factor. One comes across many such instances where someone gets reminded of events of past lives, and which the person himself has narrated.

Besides these, I shall like to draw the attention of the reader to another special fact that proves the truth of transmigration. We find frequently that among different children living in exactly the same environment and circumstances, some show outstanding progress while others lag behind. Why is this so? We see instances of twins born to the same parents on the same date and at the same time, and raised in exactly similar fashion. With great care, they are provided with the exact same kinds of food, clothes and associates, and they get to study in the same school with the same teachers. Yet over time we find that one of them does very well, perhaps coming first rank every year in his class, while the other barely scrapes through in school. Perhaps one may be attracted to a study of literature while the other's taste lies in history. Or maybe one turns out to be a bookish academic while the other is attracted to physical activities or to the company of rogues.

In such a situation even those who don't believe in transmigration instinctively state that one of the twins has better tendencies, which is why he did better compared to the other. But such people have not thought about where the one gets the good tendencies from and the other the bad tendencies. Both grew up in exactly similar circumstances. Therefore one has to admit that the differences in their inborn tendencies lie in their past lives. It is this that causes the unevenness in their education and conduct. Apart from this there is no reasonable answer to this question.

We find that no creature is born in this world without any attachment. Right from their birth, birds are fond of pecking at grains and many animals too like to graze. Can one say that these likings are formed within this very life? No! Therefore one has to admit that it is from the effects of a previous birth that one is born in this life together with these likings and attachments.

Along with the above, there is another point worth considering. Why is it that mice, for example, are excessively greedy and constantly hoarding items picked up from here and there? Or why is it that pigeons are always engrossed in the amorous acts of kissing the beaks of their partners? Why are snakes often found expressing extreme anger with their hoods spread wide, as though they were being exposed to the vicious flames of a fire? Why do we see some people happy and others unhappy in this world? Why is it that some unexpectedly obtain huge wealth while others are struck dead by lightning? And why is it that some obtain success effortlessly, while others fail throughout their lives in spite of persistent efforts?

In the absence of directly visible explanations for the above, the great sages with their divine insight and rationality took some unseen reason to be their cause. The unseen cause is regarded by the sages to be righteousness (dharma) or the lack of it (adharma), in the form of good and bad deeds in past lives. In other words, it is our various deeds of the past that lead to the various seemingly strange events of our world. Though the actions last momentarily, yet they leave a lasting impact. Thus on the basis of the inborn tendencies one has to admit the existence of the self prior to this life. It becomes self-evident that the self is eternal and transmigrates from one body to another again and again as per its karma or actions.

Gentlemen! From the above arguments it has been established that transmigration exists. This principle was realized by our ancient sages through their yogic powers and they considered this to be the foundation underlying all worldly and divine matters. Now I shall place before the reader the Vedic and scriptural proofs that were directly realized by these same great seers in the depths of their meditation as the expression of divine guidance. As was said by Manu,

आर्षंधर्मोपदेशं च वेदशास्त्राविरोधिना।
यस्तर्केणानुसन्धत्ते स धर्मं वेद नेतरः।।

According to the above, even those principles that are set firmly by elegant logic are not revered by society unless they are supported by the evidence in the Vedas and scriptures. This is our tradition. I shall, therefore, be placing in the forthcoming some verbal testimony from the Vedas as well as popular tradition.

## *Objections within the Vedas, and their reconciliation*

Before citing the proofs from the Vedas, there is need to consider and resolve an issue. It is this – can the evidence of the Vedas be considered reliable, when we do not even know the dates or authors of their composition, or when errors such as parts coming out of sequence or repetitiveness occur in them? The doubters say, no.

चित्रया यजेत पशुकामः,
पुत्रकामः पुत्रेष्ट्या यजेत

[तै.सं. २.५.६.१]

According to this injunction, one desiring an animal should perform the Citrā sacrifice, while one wishing for a son should perform the Putreṣṭi sacrifice. These are both Vedic injunctions, which become untruths in the event that even after completion of the sacrifices the mentioned benefits do not accrue to the performer of the sacrifices. Thus it also occurs that despite having performed the sacrifices the expected benefits occasionally do not occur. By this, Vedic injunctions too may be established to be untruths.

उदिते जुहोति।

श्यावोऽस्याहुतिमभ्यवहरति य उदिते जुहोति।

[तै. ब्राह्मण २.१.३]

At times, we find contradictory statements too. The first mantra or incantation above instructs that oblations be performed at the time of the rising sun, and is closely followed by the second mantra censuring the oblations performed at the time of the rising sun. The authoritativeness of the verbal testimony of the Vedas becomes dubious with such contradictory statements.

त्रिः प्रथमामन्वाह, त्रिरुत्तमामन्वाह।

Further, we find repetitiveness in the Vedas. Above, it is said that the chanting of the first and the final hymns should be repeated three times. The necessary result may be achieved by uttering it once, but repeating it thrice introduces the error called punarukti (repetition). In Maharṣi Gautama's Nyāya sūtras too we find the aphorism below that states that repetitiveness is a shortcoming that is found in false proofs.

तदप्रामाण्यमनृतव्याघातपुनरुक्तदोषेभ्यः इति।

[न्यां.द. अ.२ आ.१ सू.५८]

Just as in a vessel where rice is being cooked, seeing a few grains cooked we understand that the rice is ready, in the same manner, the unreliability of one part of the Vedas raises a doubt about the authoritativeness of the entire Vedas.

न कर्मकर्तृसाधनवैगुण्यात्,

अंभ्युपेत्य कालभेदे दोषवचनात्, अनुवादोपपत्तेश्चेति।

[न्या.द. अ.२ आ.१ सू.५८-६०]

The various objections listed previously were resolved by Maharṣi Gautama and expressed in the above aphorism. He says that Vedic sacrifices sometimes fail to yield results, but one should not therefore consider the Vedas to be untrue. The reason is that the failure of the sacrifice to yield results is not due to the untrustworthiness of the Vedas but rather some error in performing the sacrifice. When a sacrifice for obtaining a male child is performed perfectly following all the correct rites, yet if the couple performing the sacrifice is infertile, then how can the child be born? The expectation is that the desired results will be obtained when all the requirements for the sacrifice are met. If a sick person taking all appropriate medicines still continues with an unwholesome diet, it is possible that he may not improve in health, but it is no use blaming the medical sciences for that.

On the second objection regarding contradictory statements, the aphorisms of Maharṣi Gautama make it clear that when one takes the vows to perform oblations at dawn or at other times, these vows should be strictly observed. The oblations should be performed at the specified time only. Missing the specified time and performing the oblations at a later time is what is condemned in the Vedas. This form of censure is seen even in daily activities, as when someone commits to meeting another at a particular time for a specific purpose. On missing the appointment and going there later he not only breaks his word but also does not attain his objective. In fact, he becomes an object of derision. This is what is expressed in the seemingly contradictory statements expressed earlier, though in reality there is no contradiction.

The third objection is resolved by the understanding that if useless words are repeated needlessly then it is a shortcoming, but if meaningful words are repeated it serves a useful purpose. Thus in the mantras quoted above "*Triḥ Prathamā*" etc, it is not merely repetitive; rather it further emphasizes the meaning. The repetition serves a purpose. The mantra below indicates the invocation of fifteen verbal thunderbolts to destroy enemies.

इममहं भ्रातृव्यं पंचदशावरेण वाग्वज्रेण च बाधे,
योऽस्मान् द्वेष्टि यं च वयं द्विष्मः।

But in fact there are only eleven verbal weapons. The count of fifteen can be reached only when the middle nine are chanted once and the first and the final hymns are each repeated three times. This produces the set of fifteen invocations and makes the repetition purposeful. Even in daily use, we find words such as "Come, Come" repeated twice to indicate urgency without any error being associated. Similarly in the Vedas, we do not find mutually contradictive or purposeless statements, and they are thus always to be considered absolutely valid and authentic.

The above doubts and their reconciliation are meant for those who accept verbal testimony as means of valid knowledge, but lack faith in the validity of the Vedas. These people are in some respects possessed of fine intellect and deserve to be answered in the appropriate manner. But people of dull intellect argue that '*The words of the ancient*' too are equally untrustworthy, and that the truth of all assertions be judged on the criterion of direct cognition only. We have already spoken in detail about their obstinacy regarding direct perception. We shall therefore now make some statements on verbal testimony (śabda pramāṇa) as a means of valid knowledge.

If verbal testimony were not accepted as means of valid knowledge, the power of direct perception is so limited that all of our daily activities would become baseless and impossible. For instance, we accept that Pandit Nehru is the Prime Minister of India. Is it possible for him to keep his eyes constantly on every nook and corner of India? The answer is simply, no. All the associated officers of the government keep sending reports of their work either directly or through proper channels. And he has to have faith on these.

To give another example, children come out of the house with the message that food is ready to be served. Do you accept this on faith or do you go and check it first before washing your hands and getting ready for the meal? No, you just have faith in the child's words. You have faith in the words of physicians, teachers, rail station masters, even those of barbers and washermen. If you did not, it would be impossible to lead your life properly. Do scholars consider history and geography to be without basis? If not, then why is it that we do not consider the Vedas, that are filled with such profound and noble truths to be valid and authentic?

One may say that the authors of the Vedas were unknown and therefore they are untrustworthy. But the same person should be asked, how does he know that the authors of history and geography are who he takes them to be, or that their writings are not untruths? In this manner, at every step doubts may be raised, but ultimately one needs to have faith. If texts of history etc. are authentic due to having been written by authentic persons, then certainly the Vedas are also authentic as they were heard or realized by reliable and authentic sages. As stated in the definition below, those who have the mantras revealed to them are the sages.

ऋषयो मन्त्रद्रष्टारः

[मनुस्मृति अ.१२ श्लो.१०६]

If it is the unvarnished truth behind the respective subject that lets such doubters accept history and geography as it is, then let them show the untruth in the Vedas. All doubts raised so far have already been resolved. It is only the Vedas that have been accepted by even Western scholars as the most ancient scriptures of the world. At a time when all other societies were leading a barbaric, uncivilized and animal-like existence, at such a time the Vedic texts describe a civilization that fill even modern scholars with amazement. To doubt the words of such texts may be likened to not having faith in the statements of one's own parents.

Therefore, in common matters one may accept what one perceives directly, but in matters not known to direct perception one may rely only on reasoning and the verbal testimony of the scriptures. There are those who do not understand the intricacies of science, and simply rely on the stated methods of the scientists. Likewise here too the same attitude should be adopted.

Scientific truths are verified by the means of various scientific instruments, and in the same manner the truth of the Vedic principles can be established through the power of logic and the means of valid knowledge. In the foregoing an endeavour has been made to prove the principle of transmigration on the ground of logical arguments. Now the same will be established by Vedic and similar verbal testimony which is the direct or witness-form of knowledge. We use the term *'direct'* as compared to the roundabout logical reasoning which is what people today desire, and which has already been supplied. In the classical tradition the rule had been to first accept as truth whatever the scriptures stated. Next, in order to firmly establish these in one's mind, use was made of logic and arguments. Taking this same rule, Lord Kṛṣṇa has expressed in the Bhagavad-Gītā,

य: शास्त्रविधिमुत्सृज्य वर्तते कामकारत:।
न स सिद्धिमवाप्नोति न सुखं न परां गतिम्।। इति।
[भ.गी. १६-२३]

## *Transmigration in the Vedas*

पुनर्नो असुं पृथिवी ददातु पुनर्द्यौर्देवी पुनरन्तरिक्षम्।
पुनर्न: सोमस्तन्वं ददातु पुन: पूषा पथ्या या स्वस्ति।।
[ऋ.म.१० अ.८ अ.१ सू.१० ऋचा ७]

*May the (Goddess) Prithvī once again bless us with the vital élan (prāṇa)! May (the Lord controlling) the skies give us the prāṇa! May the Lord of space also give us the prāṇa! May the Soma Deva endow us with a body! May the Sun (who nourishes everything) provide us with those sustaining elements that are beneficial for everyone!*

In the above mantra, the sage prays that just as the earth and other elements protected and nourished him in this life, so may they do so in his next life.

अवसृजत पुनरग्ने! पितृभ्यो
यस्तमाहुतश्चरति स्वधाभि:।
आयुर्वसान उपवेतु शेष:
संगच्छतां तन्वा जातवेद: स्वाहा।।
[ऋ.म.१० अ.७ अ.६ सू.१६ ऋचा ५]

*O Agni (fire), this person who is being submitted to the funeral pyre with the swāhā (welfare) mantras, may his spirit be blessed by you to gain once more the place among his ancestral lineage! May this spirit regain life from whatever is left in the form of the bones etc. and get a body along with life!*

We are informed by this mantra that when the five primal constituents of physical existence get dissolved into their original form, only the individual self returns to the place again and again to take up new bodies.

आ ते एतु मन: पुन: क्रत्वे
दक्षाय जीवसे ज्योक्च सूर्यं दृशे।
पुनर्न: पितरो ददातु
देव्यो जन: जीवव्रातं सचेमहि।।
[ऋ.म.१० अ.८ अ.१ सू.१५ ऋचा ४]

*(O Subandho!) May your mind come back again (to fulfill your scriptural and mundane duties) for dexterousness, strength and life and to watch innumerable sunrises!*

This mantra affirms that after death the self is born again and is reunited with the mind.

पुनर्मा एत्विन्द्रियं पुनरात्मा द्रविणं ब्राह्मणं च।
पुनरग्नय धिष्ण्या यथा स्याम कल्पयन्तामिहैव।।
[अथर्ववेद का.६ अनु.६ सू.२ मं.१]

In the above mantra, a wish is expressed for regaining strong organs of perception, prosperity and protection for the individual self from grave sins.

आयो घर्माणि प्रथमः ससाद ततो वपूंषि कृणुषे पुरूणि।
धास्युर्योनिं प्रथम आविवेश यो वाचमनुदितां चिकेत।।
[अथर्ववेद का.५ अनु.१ सू.१ मं.२]

This mantra states that an individual self obtains a high or low birth (as a higher or lower species) depending on the virtuous or sinful actions performed in the previous life.

अन्तर्गर्भश्चरति देवतास्वाभूतो भूतः स उ जायते पुनः।
स भूतो भव्यं भविष्यत् पिता पुत्रं प्रविवेशा शचीभिः।।
[अथर्ववेद का.११ अनु.२ सू.५ मं.२०]

We are informed by this mantra that, inspired by past actions, the self makes its entry into the womb, enveloped in the vital fluids of the father.

प्रथमेन प्रमारेण मेधा विश्वङ् निगच्छति।
अद एकेन गच्छत्यद एकेन गच्छतीहैवैकेन निषेवते।।
[अथर्ववेद का.११ अनु.४ सू.१० मं.३३]

This mantra informs us that on death, the self may move in one of three directions. Those whose actions have been overwhelmingly virtuous move towards heaven, while those whose actions have been overwhelmingly sinful move towards hell. But those whose actions have been a mixture of good and bad deeds take on a new life, and return to the world again in order to experience the fruits of their actions here.

पुनर्मनः पुनरायुर्म आगन् पुनः प्राणः पुनरात्मा
आगन् पुनश्चक्षुः पुनः श्रोतं म आगन्।
वैश्वानरो अदब्धः तनूपा अग्निर्नः पातु दुरितादवद्यात्।।
[यजु. अ.४ म.१५]

*May my mind come back again! May I get a life again! May my vital force, my sight and hearing return to me! May the fire not destroy me! May it protect me from ignoble sins!*

द्वे सृती अश्रृणवम् पितृणामहं देवानामुत मर्त्यानाम्।
ताभ्यामिदं विश्वमेजत् समेति यदन्तरा पितरं मातरं च।।

[यजु. अ.१६ मं.४७]

*I have heard in the Śruti of the two paths (one is lighted and the other dark, namely the path of the gods and the path of the ancestors). It is these two paths that unite with the actively oriented universe (the one which lies between the two parents, the skies as the father and the earth as the mother).*

The foregoing two mantras state that one obtains a birth according to one's actions. There are two kinds of paths, one called transmigration leading to rebirth or returning back to this world and the other, followed by the wise, which leads to deliverance from the bondage of rebirth.

पुनरासद्य सदनमपश्च पृथिवीमग्ने!।
शेषे मातुर्यथोपस्थेऽन्तरस्या शिवस्तमः।।

[यजु. अ.१२ मं.३६]

*O Fire (Lord of Fire)! Assuming the form of water and earth, you enter the womb and rest there as a child sleeps in the mother's lap. Truly auspicious art thee!*

It is being propagated that the self returns to the world again through the path of water and earth etc.

वायुरनिलममृतमथेदं भस्मान्त शरीरम्।
ओ३म् क्रतो स्मर कृतं स्मर क्रतो स्मर कृतं स्मर।।

[यजु. अ.४० मं.१५]

The above mantra informs us that this body gets destroyed in this world itself. Again you will have to take on a new body in a new birth. Therefore you should remember your actions – meaning, it is according to your actions that you receive the new birth.

If we consider the above with broad-mindedness and good faith, our heart tells us that the Vedic mantras, by instructing us on the principles of transmigration, provide such a tremendous inspiration to perform noble actions. Would such inspiration be obtained from the beliefs of modern atheists? Our experience tells us that it is atheism alone that is at the root of excessive selfishness, absence of self-restraint and all sinful acts.

## *Transmigration in the Upaniṣads*

The episode of Naciketa in the Kaṭha Upaniṣad offers the strongest evidence of transmigration. When Naciketa saw his father Vājaśravasa donating aged and worthless cows to the sacrificial priests, he was unable to hold himself back.

पीतोदका जग्धतृणा दुग्धदोहा निरिन्द्रियाः।
अनन्दा नाम ते लोकास्तान् स गच्छति ता ददत्।। इति।
[क.उ. १.१.३]

Naciketa thought – one who donates such cows whose healthy days are over and which are no longer capable of giving milk or rearing new calves, surely such a one will bring only sorrow upon himself. With this thought he tried to prevent his father from proceeding further, but was unsuccessful. He asked over and over, "Who will you hand me over to?", and finally his father exclaimed in anger, "to Death!". Respectfully abiding by his father's wish and with joy in his heart, Naciketa proceeded to the domain of Yama, Lord of Death. When he finally met Yama, there followed between them a dialogue of tremendous significance. The principle of transmigration as elucidated there becomes crystal clear to even those of dull intellect.

On finding Yama absent from his abode, Naciketa waited patiently for him for three days, all the while without touching any food. Seeing this on his return, Yama offered Naciketa three boons. As the third boon Naciketa asked Yama the following:

येयं प्रेते विचिकित्सा मनष्येऽस्तीत्येके नायमस्तीति चैके।
एतद् विद्यामनुशिष्ट्स्त्वयाऽहं वराणामेष वरस्तृतीयः।।
[क.उ. १.१.२०]

*There is this doubt, when a man is dead. Some say his self remains, others say it does not. Please instruct me on this, that I may obtain knowledge on this issue. This is my third wish.*

Yama wished to put aside answering on this issue, tempting Naciketa instead with progeny, long life, wealth and all the pleasures of the world. But Nachiketa's desire for knowledge was not that of an ordinary man. Remaining steadfast he stated,

श्वो भावा मर्त्यस्य यदन्तकैतत् सर्वेन्द्रियाणां जरयन्ति तेजः।
अपि सर्वम् जीवितमल्पमेव तवैव वाहास्तव नृत्यगीते।।
[क.उ. १.१.२६]

*O Yamarāja! There is no saying whether these enjoyments will last till tomorrow. Not only that, they weaken our senses! Our life itself is short-lived. Let these horses, elephants, women, dancing and singing be with you only. I have no need for these.*

Pleased with the firm determination of Naciketa, Yamarāja replied,

स त्वं प्रियान् प्रियरूपांश्च कामान्
अभिध्यायन्नचिकेतोऽत्यसाक्षीः ।
नैतां सृङ्का वित्तमयीमवाप्तो
यस्यां मज्जन्ति बहवो मनुष्याः।।
[क.उ. १.२.३]

*O Naciketa! With due consideration, you have rejected the commonly desired objects such as progeny, beautiful women and the like. You have not fallen into the trap that most humanity keeps falling into. You are truly worthy of praise!*

Next Yamarāja says,

न सांपरायः प्रतिभाति बालं
प्रमाद्यन्तं वित्तमोहेन मूढम्।
अयं लोको नास्ति पर इति मानी
पुनः पुनर्वशमापद्यते मे।। इति।
[क.उ. १.२.६]

*Those ignorant ones who stay tempted by wealth and never think of the position after death, they fall into my clutches life after life. They are never delivered from the shackles of birth and death.*

Yamarāja later discusses in detail the answer to Nachiketa's third question, again saying,

योनिमन्ये प्रपद्यन्ते शरीरत्वाय देहिनः।
स्थाणुमन्येऽनुसंयन्ति यथाकर्म यथाश्रुतम्।। इति।

[क.उ. २.२.७]

*According to one's actions and knowledge one takes on innumerable lives in other bodies, some in the form of gods, humans, animals and birds, and others in the form of stationary beings such as trees.*

The Kaṭha Upaniṣad thus, in the above sections, expounds with full clarity on the subject of transmigration. Now we shall consider some of the statements from the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad on the same subject.

तद्यथा तृणजलायुका तृणस्यान्तं गत्वाऽन्यमाक्रममाक्रम्य आत्मानमुपसंहरति, एवमेवायमात्मा इदं शरीरं निहत्याविद्यां गमयित्वाऽन्यमाक्रममाक्रम्यात्मानमुपसंहरति।

[बृ.उ. ६.४.४.३]

*Just as a leech, reaching the end of a blade of grass or stalk and after making an approach to another blade, draws itself together towards it, in the same manner the self too, after the death of the body, takes the refuge of another body and attaches itself to it.*

तद्यथा पेशस्कारी पेशसो मात्रामपादाय अन्यं नवतरं कल्याणतरं रूपं तनुते, एवमेवायमात्मा इदं शरीरं निहत्य अविद्याम् (अचेतनावस्थां) गमयित्वाऽन्यं नवतरं कल्याणतरं रूपं कुरुते पित्र्यं वा गान्धर्वं वा दैवं वा प्राजापत्यं वा ब्राह्मं वाऽन्येषां वा भूतानाम्। इति। [बृ.उ. ४.४.४]

*Just as a goldsmith takes a piece of gold and shapes it into new and more beautiful forms, in the same manner, the self leaves this destroyed body and takes on various other new and more beautiful forms.*

तदेष श्लोको भवति, तदेव सक्तः सह कर्मणैति लिङ्गं मनो यत्र निषक्तमस्य। प्राप्यान्तं कर्मणस्तस्य यत् किंचेह करोत्ययम्। तस्माल्लोकात् पुनरैति अस्मै लोकाय कर्मण इति नु कामयमानः।

[बृ.उ. ४.४.६]

One whose mind is extremely attached to some object, he will pursue his desire and attain it after the necessary actions. On death he moves on to the other world, but then returns again to this world to continue his activities. This holds true only for those who perform all activities with some worldly gain in mind.

The above mantras from the Bṛhadāraṇyaka offer vivid examples of rebirth. There are many similar passages that may be quoted on this subject. But we leave this scripture now and look at some examples from the Chāndogya Upaniṣad.

यथाक्रतुरस्मिल्लोके पुरुषो भवति
तथेतः प्रेत्य भवति, स क्रतुं कुर्वीत

[छा.उ. ३.१४.१]

*One's desires and hankerings of this life will follow one after death too. Therefore one should consider the kind of being one wishes to be in the next life, and accordingly control the desires of this life.*

तद् य इह रमणीयचरणा अभ्याशो ह यत्ते रमणीयां योनिमापद्येरन् ब्राह्मणयोनिं वा क्षत्रिययोनिं वा वैश्ययोनिं वा। अथ य इह कपूयचरणा अभ्याशो ह यत्ते कपूयां योनिमापद्येरन् श्वयोनिं वा शूकरयोनिं वा चाण्डालयोनिं वा ॥ इति।

[छा.उ. ५.६.७, ५.१०.७]

The meaning of this mantra is quite clear. It states that one who has performed good deeds in this life will take on favourable circumstances in the next, while one who has committed evil acts will find himself in difficult circumstances. This entire section deals with the different kinds of circumstances one finds oneself in after death, in the next life.

असूर्या नाम ते लोका अन्धेन तमसा वृता:।
तांस्ते प्रेत्याभिगच्छन्ति ये के चात्महनो जना:।। इति।

This is the third mantra from the Īśāvāsya Upaniṣad. It says that those who put an end to their own lives find themselves reborn in demonic conditions, in gross darkness and ignorance. Here, the reference to killing oneself is specifically intended to mean those who commit evil acts. The above mantra provides strength to the principle of transmigration.

इष्टापूर्तं मन्यमाना वरिष्ठं नान्यच्छ्रेयो वेदयन्ते प्रमूढा:।
नाकस्य पृष्ठे ते सुकृतेऽनुभूत्वेमं लोकं हीनतरं विशन्ति।।

[मुण्डकोपनिषद् १.२.१०]

This mantra occurs in the 2nd canto of the Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad. It says that those people who consider Vedic sacrifices and charitable works rather than the pursuit of self-knowledge to be the most significant, enjoy the fruits of their actions in heaven, then return to this world in their next lives taking up low forms of physical existence such as animal bodies, etc.

Here too, the majority of the topics deal with the after-death movements of the self. Thus, almost all the Upaniṣads, lighting the path for the progress of the self, accept the continuous cycle of birth and death for those who lack true discriminative knowledge.

## *Transmigration in the Bhagavad-Gītā*

The Śrīmad Bhagavad-Gītā expounds on the subject of transmigration, repeatedly and with great clarity. A few examples may be cited here to sum up our contention on this subject.

Afterwards we shall have a brief glance at what other thinkers, ancient and modern, native and foreign have said on this subject.

देहिनोऽस्मिन् यथा देहे कौमारं यौवनं जरा।
तथा देहान्तरप्राप्तिर्धीरस्तत्र न मुह्यति।।
[भ.गी. अ.२ श्लो.१३]

*Just as this body passes through the stages of childhood, youth and old age, in the same manner the self also keeps taking on new bodies. The wise, therefore, do not feel attachment for this body.*

वासांसि जीर्णानि यथा विहाय नवानि गृह्णाति नरोऽपराणि।
तथा शरीराणि विहाय जीर्णान्यन्यानि संयाति नवानि देही।।
[भ.गी. अ.२ श्लो.२२]

*Just as a man discards an old garment and puts on a new one, in the same manner, the self too repeatedly discards the old body and takes on new ones.*

जातस्य हि ध्रुवो मृत्युर्ध्रुवं जन्म मृतस्य च।
तस्मादपरिहार्येऽर्थे न त्वं शोचितुमर्हसि।।
[भ.गी. अ.२ श्लो.२७]

*Death is certain for one who is born, and rebirth certain for one who is dead. Therefore O Arjuna! do not grieve for that which is unavoidable.*

बहूनि मे व्यतीतानि जन्मानि तव चार्जुन।
तान्यहं वेद सर्वाणि न त्वं वेत्थ परन्तप!।।
[भ.गी. अ.४ श्लो.५]

*O Arjuna! You and I have lived many lives prior to this one. I know of these, but O Great Practitioner of Austerity! You do not.*

जन्म कर्म च मे दिव्यमेवं यो वेत्ति तत्त्वतः।
त्यक्तवा देहं पुनर्जन्म नैति मामेति सोऽर्जुन।।
[भ.गी. अ.४ श्लो.६]

*One who recognizes the true nature of my divine incarnation and deeds, such a one after his death is not reborn. He attains to me, O Arjuna!*

Thus, the above ślokas from the Gītā support the concept of transmigration with full clarity. The import of the last śloka is that the one who understands fully the divinity of the Lord does not have to be born again. But those who do not understand have to stay bound within the repeated cycle of birth and death.

The foregoing array of evidence on transmigration from the Vedas, Upaniṣads and the Gītā have been submitted specially for those who, while holding faith in these world-renowned scriptures, either consider the subject of rebirth to be the creative imaginations of the authors of the Hindu scriptures and therefore unreliable, or are indifferent to the concept as it conflicts with their modern thinking. The main reason for their attitude is that they, while maintaining faith in the scriptures, do so from a distance. Should they delve deeper into these scriptures, surely the light of wisdom would dawn on them.

There are others who do not even hold faith in the scriptures and consider the principle of transmigration to be the product of the fertile imagination of a specific individual or society. Their thinking is, why should one accept blindly what has been said by others?

The answer to this is that in daily behaviour they accept the sayings of others, as well as the written texts of history by others. Why should they not trust the statements in the scriptures then? Or, putting it another way, why should we believe their statements that there is no basis for rebirth?

How is it that we consider as untrustworthy the words of those sages of old who were filled with realization and powers obtained through austerities, and who lived among societies that were free of passionate attachments and dislikes? How is it that we instead trust and accept the arbitrary words of those living in today's greed and hatred filled societies? Perhaps one may question as to how we know that the past ages were nobler, with a greater moral basis as well as austerity. To such a questioner our humble submission is as follows. Do we not hold in high esteem the virtues such as truth, non-violence, non-theft, etc? These high values are established from the behaviour of our ancient sages and our scriptures. Now you may ponder over the fact that the age that first made known to the entire world the value of such virtues must surely be on a sounder moral footing than our times. It is only after detailed examination and investigations that these ideals were propagated to the world.

## *Transmigration in the Indian philosophical systems*

### *1. Maharṣi Gautama*

In the very first section of the first chapter of the Nyāya Darśana, Maharṣi Gautama defines the term '*pretyabhāva*' as being born again and again, or rebirth.

पुनरुत्पत्तिः प्रेत्यभावः

[न्यायदर्शन अ.१, आ.१, सू.१९]

Thus clearly providing support for the concept of rebirth, he writes further:

पूर्वाभ्यस्तस्मृत्यनुबन्धाज्जातस्य हर्षभयशोकसम्प्रतिपत्तेः

[न्या.द. अ.३, आ.१, सू.१९]

प्रेत्याहाराभ्यासकृतात् स्तन्याभिलाषात्

[न्या.द. अ.३, आ.१, सू.२२]

वीतरागजन्मादर्शनात्

[न्या.द. अ.३, आ.१, सू.२५]

आत्मनित्यत्वे प्रेत्यभावसिद्धिः

[न्या.द. अ.४, आ.१, सू.१०]

The ideas behind the first three aphorisms have already been expressed in the section '*Arguments supporting transmigration*'. The fourth signifies that the eternal nature of the self automatically proves the existence of rebirth. If as the

Cārvākas believe, the self is destroyed along with the body at death, then who is there to be reborn? Therefore an effort has been made here to establish the eternality of the self prior to establishing the transmigration of the self.

### 2. *Kaṇāda*

He writes in the Vaiśeṣika sutras, instructing on the process of obtaining liberation.

तदभावे संयोगाभावोऽप्रादुर्भावश्च मोक्षः।। इति।

[वै.द. अ.५ आ.२ सू.१८]

The sequence of steps towards liberation begins with listening to the discriminative knowledge, contemplating over it and then meditating on it, thereby finally identifying wholly with the elements of truth. Through this process one destroys ignorance born of desires and attachments. Next, the three flaws of attachment, aversion and delusion desert him. The result is that his self takes up no more physical bodies and experiences no future lives. This is what is known as liberation. Here, the expression '*aprādurbhāvaśca mokṣaḥ*' clearly supports the theory of transmigration, as it states that the cycle of rebirth into new physical bodies will continue till such time as liberation is achieved.

अपसर्पणमुपसर्पणमशितपीतसंयोगाः
कार्यान्तराणि चादृष्टकारितानि।। इति।

[वै.द. अ.५ आ.२ सू.१७]

He writes the above aphorism right before the previous one. This discusses the adṛiṣṭa, namely actions already performed whose fruits are yet to be received, as being the unseen cause behind the various activities listed in the aphorism. These activities include apasarpaṇa or the process by which the self leaves one physical body and upasarpaṇa or the process of taking on a new body along with the other elements such as mind, vital élan, etc. Thus this aphorism too provides ample support for transmigration.

### 3. *Īśvara Kṛṣṇa*

In the Sāṁkhya Kārikā, the great sage Īśvara Kṛṣṇa discusses the subtle body.

पूर्वोत्पन्नमसक्तं नियतं महदादिसूक्ष्मपर्यन्तम्।
संसरति निरुपभोगं भावैरधिवासितं लिङ्गम्।। इति।

[सां.का. ४०]

In the above kārikā, he uses the term niyatam to indicate the continuous existence of the subtle body from the original creation to the final dissolution, while the term saṁsarati is applied to mean transmigration or the repeated taking up and abandoning of the body made of the six sheaths, namely hair, blood, flesh, nerves, bones and marrow. He then writes:

तत्र जरामरणकृतं दुःखं प्राप्नोति चेतनः पुरुषः।
लिङ्गस्याविनिवृत्तेस्तस्माद् दुःखं स्वभावेन।।

[सां.का. ५५]

This kārikā informs that Puruṣa (the sentient spirit) continues to experience sorrow caused by decay and death, till such time as the true discriminative knowledge of the Puruṣa and Prakṛti (primal nature) is not attained and until the subtle body has ceased to be.

These kārikās of Īśvara Kṛṣṇa instruct that rebirth occurs again and again till liberation is achieved. The sage Kapila is generally credited with originating this system of thought. But today there is some controversy over this, and hence reference is made to the Sāṁkhya Kārikā of Īśvara Kṛṣṇa here. These same quotations have been referred to by various later sages such as the Saṁkarācārya.

### 4. *Patañjali*

The author of the Yoga Darśana, Maharṣi Patañjali has expressed his assent on the subject of transmigration in the following aphorisms:

क्लेशमूल: कर्माशयो दृष्टादृष्टजन्मवेदनीय:।

[यो.द.समा.पा. सू.१२]

There are five mental sufferings associated with the mental dispositions of ignorance (avidyā), egoism (asmitā), attachment (rāga), hatred (dveṣa) and the desire to cling to life (abhiniveśa). These together form the storehouse of the latent tendencies which remain at the root of the deeds of this life and the next.

अपरिग्रहस्थैर्ये जन्मकथन्तासम्बोध: ।

[यो.द.समा.पा. सू.३९]

When one is steadfast and established in abstention from greed or aparigraha, one of the five yamas or abstentions, he gains knowledge about his past and future lives.

संस्कारसाक्षात्करणात् पूर्वजातिज्ञानम् ।

[यो.द.वि.पा. सू.१८]

This aphorism tells us that memory is aroused by hidden, clinging impressions. Birth in a low or high species, long age and the experiences of life too are caused by meritorious and de-meritorious impressions. When one receives direct cognition of all these impressions, one obtains knowledge about one's past lives.

All the above three aphorisms of Patañjali support the concept of transmigration.

### *5. Jaimini [Pūrva Mīmāṁsā Ācārya]*

विश्वजिता यजेत।

The above Vedic injunction merely instructs that the Viśvajīta sacrifice be performed. There is no mention of any benefits. This then raises the question - does this rite enjoined by the Vedas provide any benefit at all? If so, are the benefits single or multiple? Are they absolutely certain or are they doubtful?

The great sage Jaimini responds to these doubts by asserting that there is a definite benefit to performing this sacrifice, namely the attainment of svarga or heaven. Heaven is equally cherished by all as it is untouched by sorrow and is associated with great joy. Jaimini has shed light on this in the aphorism below from the Pūrva Mīmāṁsā Darśana.

स स्वर्गः सर्वान् प्रत्यविशिष्टत्वात्। इति।

[मी.द. अ.४ पा.३ अधि.७ सू.१५]

The above also establishes the fact that the existence of the self is necessary after death, otherwise who would be there to experience the delights of heaven?

क्षीणे पुण्ये मर्त्यलोकं विशन्ति।

[भ.गी. अ.९ श्लो.२१]

Later, by the Vedic postulation noted above, he informs that once the merits that have led to experiencing the delights of heaven are exhausted, the self again returns to this transient world to take on a new birth. In this manner, there are many other aphorisms that describe the rites of other Vedic sacrifices yielding the benefit of heaven's pleasures. These may also be understood to lend support to the eternality of the self and its repeated rebirth in this world.

चित्रया यजेत पशुकामः।

[तै.सं. २.५.६.१]

योगसिद्धिर्वाऽर्थस्योत्पत्त्ययोगित्वात्। इति।

[मी.द. अ.४ पा.३ अधि.१२ सू.२८]

The Vedic injunction above states that one who has a desire to possess cattle should perform the Citrā sacrifice. Here the question arises as to whether this reward of cattle will occur in this life or in the next.

On the above doubt, Maharṣi Jaimini states in his aphorism above that the reward of cattle may be attained in this life itself, if there are no obstructions in the form of sins committed in the past, otherwise the rewards would be attained in the next life. Thus, this indicates that the time of obtaining the fruits is indeterminate. The Vedas do not clearly establish the linkage between rebirth and the attainment of the fruits of various sacrifices. The Citrā sacrifice merely claims to result in the attainment of cattle to the performer of the sacrifice, which attainment may well occur in this life. One may infer that if the attainment of these cattle is not in this life then it is in the next, and thus here the statement of Jaimini supports the concept of transmigration. Attainment of heaven is clearly an other-worldly result, as complete absence of sorrow and bliss untouched by sorrow is impossible to attain in this activity-bound and sorrow-filled earth. In the above aphorism, '*yogasiddhi*' refers to attainment of fruits of action, '*va*' refers to different possibilities, '*artha*' refers to the fruits, and '*utpatyogitvāt*' refers to the uncertain time of experiencing the fruits of one's actions. This aphorism thus clearly supports the theory of transmigration. Were it not so, there would be no reference to fruits of actions being experienced in this world or the next.

The commentator of the Śāstra Dīpikā offers his explanation of the aphorism as below, using the term '*bhavāntare*' to mean rebirth.

विपाकः कर्मणां येषां प्राग्देहविनिपाततः।
प्राप्तस्तानीह भुज्यन्ते ततोऽन्यानि भवान्तरे॥
[शा.दी.मी.द., ५.३.१२.२८]

## 6. *Śrī Bādrāyaṇa Vyāsa*

It is clear from the Vedānta Sūtras that their author, Maharṣi Vyāsa cherished the concept of transmigration.

कृतात्ययेऽनुशयवान् दृष्टस्मृतिभ्यां यथेतमनेवं च।
[वे.द. अ.३ पा.१ सू.८]

Here a query is raised as to whether or not the individual self, when it arrives from heaven in this world of birth and death, brings with it any innate tendencies associated with past actions. Vyāsa responds to the query by stating that some of the past actions are neutralized as their fruits are obtained in heaven itself, while it is with the remainder of the past actions that he finds birth in this world. It would be fallacious to say that all the fruits of actions are received in heaven itself. For example, when one performs the Aśvamedha sacrifice and succeeds in obtaining the position of Indra (the king of gods), how is it possible that simultaneously he suffers by having to take up a low form such as a pig as a consequence of past evils committed by him? Therefore the reality is that he takes the remainder of the actions whose fruits he has not yet experienced, and returns to this world.

In this text, Maharṣi Vyāsa has expounded on the topic of transmigration with great clarity. In particular, the entire first section of the third chapter expresses his thinking on the subject of transmigration. Citing there the example of the five-fold fire, he describes the movement of the individual self in the world. Listed below are a few quotations discussing these views, and the interested reader may look directly into these sūtras and associated commentary for further details.

तदन्तरप्रतिपत्तौ रंहति संपरिष्वक्तः प्रश्ननिरूपणाभ्याम्।

[वे.सू. ३.१.१.१]

जीवो मुख्यप्राणसचिवः सेन्द्रियः समनस्कोऽविद्या–
कर्मपूर्वप्रज्ञापरिग्रहः पूर्वदेहं विहाय देहान्तरं प्रतिपद्यते।

[शां.भा.वे.सू. ३.१.१.१]

अन्यन्नवतरं कल्याणतरं रूपं कुरुते।

[बृ.उ. ४.४.१.४]

### *7. Rebirth in the Jaina viewpoint*

The concept of transmigration is valued greatly by the Jaina Darśana too. One of the oldest authors of the Jaina philosophy, the exalted sage Śrī Umāsvāti establishes this in his Tattvārthādigama Sūtra and its associated commentary, also written by him. Though in the Digamber sect, the author of the sūtras and their commentator are different, here there is no controversy about Śrī Umāsvāti's playing both roles. His dual role in this is also apparent from the word-forms '*vakṣhayāmi*' and '*pravakṣhayāmi*' in the context of introductions to the sūtras, and in the sūtra '*guṇaparyyāyavaddravyam*' [Ch.5 Su. 17] as well as various statements in the commentary. We may therefore take references from both in support of the postulate of transmigration.

तिर्यग्योनीनांच।

[तत्त्वार्थसूत्र अ.३ सू.१८]

द्विविधा चैषां मनुैष्यतिर्यग्योनिजानां
स्थिति: भवस्थिति: कायस्थितिश्चेति।

[उमास्वाती]

In the commentary of the above sūtra Umāsvāti writes that man and beast take on two states of life in this wor ld. The first is bhavastithi in which the vital force takes on a life for a short while, experiencing happiness and sorrow. The other state is kāyastithi, in which the same vital force repeatedly takes on new forms as man or beast after death.

हिंसादिष्विहामुत्र चापायावद्यदर्शनम्।

[त.सू. अ.७ सू.४]

From the above sūtra, the term '*iha*' refers to this life while the term '*amutra*' refers to the next.

अनादौ संसारे नरकतिर्यग्योनिमनुष्यामरभवग्रहणेषु चक्रवत्
परिवर्तमानस्य जन्तो: सर्व एव जन्तव: स्वजना: परजना
वा। अनित्याशरणसंसारैकत्वा .... अनुप्रेक्षा।

[त.सू. अ.८ सु.७]

The first aphorism above is written while describing the term '*saṁsāra*'. Umāsvāti says here that the self moves from womb to womb and in the process repeatedly experiences birth and death. This is also evident from the second aphorism above.

कृत्स्नकर्मक्षयो मोक्षः।

[त.सू. अ.१० सू.३]

तत्क्षयसमकालमेवौदरिकशरीरवियुक्तस्यास्य
जन्मनः प्रहाणम्, हेत्वभावाच्चोत्तरस्याप्रादुर्भावः। इति।

The above sūtra states that one who has experienced all the fruits of his actions has no more births to undergo, while one who has not yet exhausted these will certainly be born again. In this manner, the Jaina religion expresses its faith in transmigration in no ambiguous terms.

### *8. Buddhist views on transmigration*

अनेक जातिसंसारं सन्धाविस्सं अनिब्बिसम्।
गहकारकं गवेसन्तो दुक्खा जाति पुनप्पुनम्।। इति।

[घम्मपद जरावग्गश्लोक ८]

*Searching for the Creator of this body, I have needlessly undertaken many births. This repeated sequence of births causes great sorrow.*

सो करोति दीपमत्तनो खिप्पं वायम पण्डितो भव।
निद्धन्तमलो अनङ्गणो न पुनर्जातिजरं उपेहसि।। इति।

*Therefore, be a lamp unto yourself. With full readiness, obtain knowledge. Then, free of impurity and sin, you will not have to undergo old age or rebirth.*

भिद्धी यदा होति महग्घसोच,
निद्दायिता सम्परिवत्तसायी।
महावरोहा व निवापपुट्ठो,
पुनप्पुनं गब्भमुपैति मन्दो।।

*When a man becomes slothful, eating and sleeping in excess, perpetually remaining filthy and merely rolling from side to side like a pig, such a one repeatedly takes on birth.*

All the above three ślokas were stated by Lord Buddha in the course of his preaching. The first and the third śloka discuss repeated births with great clarity while the second describes how release from this cycle of rebirths comes only through a state of purity and wisdom. This is similar to the description in the Vedic scriptures of how liberation comes through true discriminative knowledge.

The Jātaka legends of the Buddhists are replete with instances of rebirth. Therefore there is no doubt that the Buddhist religion too has full faith in the concept of transmigration.

## The ideas of modern Indian thinkers on rebirth

### 1. Kabirdas, the noble preceptor

The great spiritual teacher Kabirdas had strong faith in the concept of rebirth. It is quite obvious from his poetry and symbolical expressions used by him.

भूला लोग कहैं घर मेरा।
नौ मन सूत अरुझि नहि सुरझै,
जनम जनम का फेरा।।

[बीजक शब्द - ८५]

The above verse clearly points at the ignorance persisting through various births.

रस गगन गुफा में अझर झरे।
जुगन जुगन की तृषा बुझानी करम भरम अघ व्याधि हरै।
कहँहि कबीर सुनो भाई साधो ! अमर होय कबहूँ न मरै।।

[शब्दावली]

Once one has tasted Reality, whose never-drying stream is flowing uninterruptedly, quenching the thirst of desires accumulated through several births, removing all the disillusions and ignorance of actions and dispelling all sins and ailments, then finally does one obtain immortality. Thus this verse admits that only through knowledge can one become immortal without ever fearing death. Otherwise, says the saint poet, who can ever escape birth and death? Similar feelings are expressed in the verse below.

रे मन नेकी करले, दो दिन का मेहमान रे मन,
रहटमाल पनघट में फिरता, आता जाता भरा औ रीता
जुगन जुगन तू मरता जीता, क्यों करता अभिमान रे।।

[शब्दावली]

This verse describes the individual's travel to and fro through life and death, as though carrying a vessel filled with unquenched desires. Seeking their satisfaction at the well of actions, sometimes getting it filled and sometimes leaving it empty, he leaves the scene. So he says, '*O mind! Leave behind your arrogance and work for the beneficence of others!*'

कुमति कीच चेला भरा, गुरु ज्ञान जल होय।
जनम जनम का मोरचा, पल में डारे धोय।।

[साखी]

In the above couplet, the poet says that knowledge obtained from the guru or teacher is like clean water that cleanses the dirt collected through numerous lives, and serves not just to free the sorrows of this life alone.

Thus the noble saint Kabirdas openly admits the theory of rebirth focusing on it in detail in his verses and couplets.

### *2. Tulasidas, the great saint poet*

The poetry of Goswami Tulasidas does not express any special thinking or philosophy as do the Gītā or the Upaniṣads. Yet on different occasions in the context of his poetic writings he clearly supports the concept of transmigration. The following verses are from his renowned Ram Charita Manas.

नाना जन्म कर्म पुनि नाना।
किये जोग जग तप मख दाना।।

सुधि मोहि नाथ जन्म बहुकेरी।
शिवप्रसाद मति मोह न घेरी।।

हर गुरु निन्दक दादुर होई।
जन्मसहस्त्र पाव तन सोई।।

[रामचरितमानस उ. का.]

In the above couplets, rebirth is very clearly being discussed and supported.

जासु नाम सुमिरत एक बारा।
उतरहि नर भव–सिन्धु अपारा।।

[रामचरितमानस अयो. का.]

भगत भूमि भूसुर सुरभि,
सुरहित लागि कृपाल।
करत चरित धरि मनुज–तनु,
सुनत मिटहि भवजाल।।

[रामचरितमानस अ.का.]

सद्गुरू ग्यान विराग योग के।
विबुध बैद भव भीम रोग के।।

[रामचरितमानस बा. का.]

भंजेउ राम आप भव–चापू।
भव–भय भञ्जन नामप्रतापू।।

[रामचरितमानस बा. का.]

In the above couplets, the terms like '*bhava sindhu*', '*bhava jāla*' and '*bhava bhaya*' signify the chain of births and deaths.

विवसहुं जासु नाम नर कहहीं।
जन्म अनेक रचित अघ टरहीं।।

[रामचरितमानस, बा. का.]

These verses offer clear evidence of Tulasidas' faith in rebirth.

Although the saint poets belonging to the Vedic tradition may be included in the earlier Vedic section, yet their separate importance is no less. They therefore deserve to be mentioned separately as their poetry, sayings and preaching have inspired the common people, enlightened their views and guided their moral conduct.

### *3. Guru Nanak*

तस्मादीश्वरादेव भीत: समीरश्चलति तथा (पौर्वात्यादि)
वायवो वहन्ति, शतसहस्रनद्यस्तत एव भीता: सत्य:
स्रवन्ति, धरणी तस्मादेव भयाज्जगद्भारमुद्वहति,
वारिदोऽपि वारिभारमुद्वहँस्तत एव भयाद् वियति
समुड्डीयते। सूर्याचन्द्रमसौ तस्मादेव भयाल्लक्षाधिकमीला
(अर्धक्रोशा) नामनन्तपथे धावन्तौ निरन्तरं चलतस्तराम्।
जीवसमूहानां संसारे गमनागमने तत एव भयात् कारणाद्
भवत:। ........किन्तु स्वयं सत्पुरुष एवैकमात्रं निर्भयोऽस्ति।

[वार राग आसा, श्लोक, पउडी ४]

Guru Nanak tells us in the above how out of fear all living beings are moving through the cycle of birth and death. It is only the Lord Almighty who is fearless and without enemy.

आत्मा नो म्रियते, नो तरति, न वा जले निमज्जति
(बूडति)। स्वातीतसंस्कारै: प्रभावित: स निज–

सामर्थ्यानुसारेण कर्म कुर्वाणस्तथेश्वरेच्छया (संसारे) आयाति याति च।

[गउडी २.२]

Distinguishing the self from the physical body, Guru Nanak says that the self neither dies, nor moves over water, nor drowns in it. The accumulated mental tendencies provoke it into performing actions which it does as per the capability of its physical embodiment. The self comes in and goes out at the Lord's will alone.

According to the views of Guru Nanak, liberation or deliverance from rebirth is possible only when noble deeds are performed and accompanied with God's grace. He says,

पुनी पापी आखणु नाहिं।
करि करि करणी लिखिलै जाहु।।
आपे बीजी आपे हि खाउ।
नानक हुकमी आवहु जाहु।।

Here Guru Nanak uses the terms coming and going to indicate rebirth only. There is thus not the slightest doubt that Guru Nanak had strong faith in the principles of rebirth.

### *4. Swami Dayananda Saraswati*

The views of Swami Dayananda Saraswati, founder of the Ārya Samaj, are being presented here with English translation.

Query - Does or does not the self face the sorrows of rebirth after attaining liberation?

न च पुनरावर्तते न च पुनरावर्तते।

[छा.उ. प्र.८ खं.१५]

अनावृत्तिः शब्दादनावृत्तिः शब्दात्।

[वे.द. अ.४ पा.४ सू.२२]

यद् गत्वा न निवर्तन्ते तद्धाम् परमं मम

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All these statements indicate that attaining true liberation means never coming back to this world.

Answer – The above mentioned position that one never returns back is not properly said as the Vedas speak otherwise. For instance:

अग्नेर्वयं प्रथमस्यामृतानां मनामहे चारुं देवस्य नाम।
स नो मह्या अदितये पुनर्दात् पितरं च दृशेयं मातरं च।।
[ऋ. म.१ सू.२४ मं.२]

*We learn about this self-effulgent, eternal, ever-free Lord's name who (after the death of our physical body) gives us the taste of bliss (temporarily in heaven). He then makes us see the faces of our parents on this earth later on (by returning us to this world and placing us in a new womb).*

The individual continuously alternates between the states of bondage (i.e., the taking up of a new body and life) and liberation (i.e., the passing on of the self to a new world after the physical body's death). Neither of these states will ever completely disappear.

Query – Is there one life or many?

Answer – Many

Query – Then why do people not recall the incidents of their previous lives?

Answer – They do not remember because they are limited in knowledge and time.

Query – Does one get liberation in one life or in many?

Answer – In many lives one attains it.

In this viewpoint the individual self after obtaining liberation goes to the Brahma Loka, enjoys the bliss of knowledge till the end of that particular era and then the free soul again returns back to the earth. It means that in the opinion of Swami Dayananda one can not be free for ever. Though there may be a difference of opinion regarding the nature of liberation, yet Swami Dayananda too admits to rebirth according to one's actions (karma). This alone was meant to be shown here.

### *5. Swami Vivekananda*

Swami Vivekananda was the great disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, a great exponent of the liberal tradition of the Vedic philosophy. We shall be citing certain (*translated and paraphrased*) passages from the sayings of Swami Vivekananda.

*When all the sins and evil deeds are destroyed by the good deeds, then the self regains its purity. It leaves the world by the divine vehicle for the Brahma Loka which is beyond the region of the sun and lightning. It dwells there forever, never getting death or rebirth.*

[Paraphrased from Darshanik Chintan ke Sopan, p. 233]

*As long as one has the conviction that one is the body, that long there is the occurrence of taking birth again and dying again. The human soul goes on moving from one body to another. It does not even know how many forms it takes up during this flux. Each new born comes to this world with its previously accumulated karmas, and these are obvious from its physical and mental structure.*

*[Paraphrased from Vivekananda Sahitya :*
*Bharatiya Ādhyatmika Cintanadhar, p. 254-256]*

*If I do not make my own destiny then I can not be free. I have to take the responsibility of my own tragic predicament as I have to face whatever I have done in my previous births. This is my philosophy of rebirth. We carry the impressions of our previously done deeds to the next life. My good or bad fortune is the outcome of my own deeds. If we perform noble deeds we surely move in the direction of perfection.*

*[Paraphrased from Vivekananda Sahitya :*
*Hindu Dharma, p. 260]*

*Taking up birth, followed by eating, drinking and again dying, this process is followed. One does not know how many* *people come and go again and again in this way.*

*[Paraphrased from Vivekananda Sahitya :*
*Ātma - uske bandhan tatha mukti, p. 221]*

Swami Vivekananda too thus expresses great faith in the principle of rebirth.

### *6. Madanmohan Malaviya, the great intellect*

Madanmohan Malaviya was a great soul who besides being a great advocate of universal Hindu culture and religion, was also a great political and social reformer. His faith in the Vedic tradition was unflinching. His opinions regarding the theory of rebirth should certainly be made known to all people.

स्वर्गकामोऽश्वमेधैर्य: करोति नियमाज्ञया।
तद्भोगान्ते पतेद्भूय: स जन्मनि भवार्णवे।।

His article on '*Mother Worship and Animal Sacrifice*' warns that man falls back into the ocean of life and death. It expresses his acceptance of the theory. Again elsewhere he quotes the following:

बहूनां जन्मनामन्ते मयि भावोऽनुवर्तते।
प्राणिनां सर्वभावेन जन्माभ्यासेन भो यम।।

तस्मात् सुकृतिन: सर्वे येषां भावोऽनुवर्तते।
जन्मजन्मानुवृत्तानां विस्मयं नैव कारयेत्।।

स्त्रीबालशूद्रा: श्वपचाधमाश्चप्राग्जन्मसंस्कारवशाद्धि धर्म।
योनिं गता: पापिषु वर्तमानास्तर्थपि शुद्धा मनुजा भवन्ति।।
[स्क.पु.माहेशखण्ड:]

अनेकजन्मपुण्यौघैर्दीक्षितो जायते नर:।
तथाप्यनेकपुण्येन शिवविष्णुपरायण:।।
[रुद्रयामल:]

ब्रह्मज्ञानात् परं प्राप्य पुनर्जन्म न विद्यते।
[स्क.पु.नागरखण्ड:]

These citations were given by Malaviya in his article on uplifting the untouchables or social pariahs. In these ślokas the unbroken causal relationship between one's actions and rebirth have been explained. Malaviya explains that it is only due to one's karma that one gets rebirth among a particular species. Finally, the knowledge of the ultimate reality of Brahmaṇa alone frees a man from the shackles of rebirth.

Thus it is clear from the above that Malaviya had firm faith in the theory of transmigration.

### 7. Mahatma Gandhi

The quotations below are translations of Mahatma Gandhi's writings.

*What the self does after leaving the body is purely a matter of conjecture. But this is certain, that the self does not perish with the body. For the rest, we may depend on our faith in God or the laws of nature.*

To Kaka Kalelkar

*Man is not an animal. It is after innumerable births in animal forms that he has reached the human stage. He is born so as to walk with his head held high, not for crawling on his stomach.*

Kutsit jeevan aur dampatya vimarsha, p. 66, Edition 3

*I have as much faith in rebirth as in the reality of this body; therefore I know that even a little effort does not go to waste.*

Kutsit jeevan aur dampatya vimarsha, p. 100, Edition 3

### 8. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

Writing about his jail sojourns in the '*Discovery of India*', Pandit Nehru says that the moon which had always been his companion in prison had become even more intimate as a result of close contact. It served to remind him of the beauty of the world and of the ebbs and flows of life. It particularly reminded him of the fact that dawn always follows the night, and that death and rebirth have always been following each other in an unending series.

### *9. Sri Aurobindo Ghose:*

*__Note__: Sri Aurobindo's opinions as expressed below are taken from various translations of his works, primarily 'Navjanma, dharma aur jatiyata' by Kunja Bihari, 'Is jagat ki paheli' by Madan Gopal Gadodia, and 'Punarjanma aur kramik vikas'.*

'*And hark! Their silence turns the wheels of life.*'

Poem 10, Kavitanjali

Sri Aurobindo refers above to that unwavering, deep silence which makes the wheels of birth move on. Elsewhere he writes on the individual self taking on a human form - *And climb from death to a diviner birth, grasped and supported immortal will.* It indicates a slow but upward movement of the self towards divinity after death. The self returns from that limitless realm of death, to the good life in this limited world, in order to work towards a better and more divine life.

In his essays on rebirth, he refers to the principle of rebirth, knowledge of which was received by our ancient seers through yoga-sādhanā (realized in the state of samādhi by the silencing and transcending of the mental inclinations). It was lost sight of under the western influence, but had been once again brought to the fore by the renewed interest in the study of Vedānta and the Gītā inspired by Sri Ramakrishna. Just as in the physical world, heredity holds good, in the same way in the subtle creation the principle of rebirth holds good. He cites from the Gītā,

शुचीनां श्रीमतां गेहे, योगभ्रष्टोऽभिजायते।

[भ.गी. अ.६ श्लो.४१]

अथवा योगिनामेव कुले भवति धीमताम्।

[भ.गी. अ.६ श्लो.४२]

He also cautions not to encourage the false notions about rebirth. He gives the example of one who arrogantly thinks himself to be born as a particular scholar (say, Jagishwar Mishra), or as the reincarnation of that same person. He has the same personality, the same nature, the same qualities, the only difference being instead of a turban he now wears a cap, previously he spoke in Saṁskṛta and now he speaks in Hindi. This kind of thinking is a fallacy. In fact, rebirth is not the repetition of the same phenomena. The individual self takes rebirth for its progress upwards so that at the end it may transcend the gross physical or material level and rise to the worship or adoration of the Lord. Only the subtle central self is reborn, not the outward personality. Personality is merely a mould created to express the inner experiences. Suppose Virgil is born again. It is not necessary that he would be a great poet. He might become a thinker, a yogī, one whose purpose of life might be to realize the highest truth and manifest it in his life.

His ideas on rebirth are explicitly formulated in his book on rebirth and gradual evolution, where he talks about how the west in ancient times knew about transmigration. But the modern sciences of today neither know nor are capable of understanding the self. They are now limited to knowledge of the development of the muscles, nervous system and the brain's functions in the foetus. They seem quite helpless on subjects ranging beyond the physical realm. Rebirth, according to Sri Aurobindo, is an opportunity and a mechanism for spiritual evolution which compensates for all previous imperfections. It makes life a meaningful ascent instead of a mechanical movement. It reveals the divine glimpses of the conscience and consciousness. It makes various regions of existence appear as a chain of self-expansion. It sets one on the path of self-knowledge, and makes the promise of a bountiful return. The deep-rooted attachments do determine the possibility of continuing relationships from one life to another. But as per the rule, the same relationships are by and large never repeated. The same individual selves do come back to earth and get back in touch with each other but not in the same capacity or role. If the same experiences are repeated in rebirth, then the purpose of the new life would remain unfulfilled.

Every time the individual self is reborn, it takes up a new mind, vital element and physical body created out of the material causes of the universe. Its creation is based on its past impressions collected from past actions and its future evolutionary needs. The self can also go directly to the domain of pure consciousness after death, though this is determined by whatever is on its mind or awareness towards the final moments prior to death, as evidenced by the śloka below.

अन्तकाले च मामेव स्मरन् मुक्तवा कलेवरम्।
यः प्रयाति स मद्भावं याति नास्त्यत्र संशयः।।

[भ.गी. अ.८ श्लो.५]

The inner self is born for new experiences. Until it makes the divine truth descend into the physical element of the body, it continues to be reborn for its self-development. In reality, it is the spirit, the central being that takes up the body and not the external personality. Sri Aurobindo adds the caution that it is true that there is rebirth, but to say that such and such a person is born as another particular person needs very serious investigation.

Further, Yogī Aurobindo says that death is mere discarding of the body; it is not the destruction of individual existence. It is similar to one going to a foreign country and changing his apparel – it does not mean that he should be declared dead.

In the Vedas we find references being made to the higher worlds where radiant bodies dwell. The yogic ideas and methods found in the east and west alike tell us that there may be stage of evolution when our earth and the humans living here may develop an enlightened state of existence.

The western theory of evolution states that man has evolved out of the animal state. But the Indian viewpoint on this is different. Here the physical is considered evolved from the spiritual as here it is said that the one divine and spiritual reality is manifested as the many. Whatever appears as the material or the gross was created by the Lord in the causal or subtle form.

From the causal it proceeds to the subtle and from there to the manifest matter. When the reverse process is followed it all goes back to its original spiritual or divine form.

These words of Sri Aurobindo not only enlighten people on the matter of transmigration and make them believe in it strongly, but also serve to make us aware the our birth is to make the divine descend on earth.

### *10. Rabindra Nath Tagore*

The Nobel Laureate Rabindra Nath Tagore, popularly known as Gurudeva, writes in his Gitanjali in the very first poem that the Lord has placed him on an unending journey in which the fragile vessel of the body is repeatedly emptied and then again filled up with the nectar of life. He says (translated), "*This little flute of mine is sounded by thee with music that echoes in the hills and valleys. In this little bag of mine, you pour gifts at an unrestricted pace. This movement never ceases but Alas! My small bag remains empty.*"

In the same memorable collection, in the sixty-third poem, he praises the ever-present Lord who has introduced him to friends that he did not know earlier, brought him to enter houses that were not his, brought closer those who were far away and made brothers out of strangers. Tagore says that at times he feels agitated at having to leave familiar places, but that is because he forgets that the old is existent in the new and that the Lord too is there. Calling the Lord his sole companion in his endless travels, he says that the Lord binds his heart to that of strangers in bonds of love, in this world and in the next. Days may come and go, but it is the one who makes the heart swirl with the passions of different forms and names, joys and sorrows who is the only real One.

Further on, Tagore speaks of the Lord colouring this clay pot of his with numerous hues and perpetually filling it with new wines of enchanting fragrance. His world lights its hundreds of lamps by the Lord's radiance, and places them at His altar.

In the foregoing, the world poet Rabindra Nath has expressed his views on rebirth quite clearly.

### *11. Sir Radhakrishnan*

*The emergent view of the self makes the hypothesis of rebirth a reasonable one. Throughout nature life is preserved and continued through incessant renewal. Life is a perpetual going on, never resting; always straining forward for something that has not been but should be. While at the zoological level the perpetuation of the species is the end, at the human level development of unique individuality seems to be the end in view..."like corn the mortal grows; like corn is born again" (Kaṭhopaniṣad). They (human selves) carry on past threads, weave out something in the present and prepare for the future.*

An idealist view of life, Chapter VII, p. 289

The self always endeavours to progress its individuality (i.e., taking on better characteristics and inclinations) to fulfill its purpose. It can attain limitless depth, power and greatness. Pointing at the eternal nature of the self, Dr. Radhakrishnan writes, "*We can not in one life exercise all the powers we possess or exhaust all the values we strain after. The capacity of the self for endless improvement, and the pervasive facts of continuance point to a future where the self's withheld completions obtain a chance*".

In the above, the incomparable philosopher of modern India Dr. Radhakrishnan expresses his advocacy for the theory of rebirth of the self.

### *12. Sri Gopinath Kaviraj*

***Note:*** The opinions of Sri Gopinath Kaviraj are selected, translated and paraphrased from his book 'Manishi ki lokayatra'.

Let us cite a few passages written by this great contemporary thinker and scholar. He writes, "*Death is the upper limit of life beyond which nothing exists. Death certainly alters many things. But it does not destroy totally a man's personal* *traits, tendencies or character, nor does it change these completely. Each self has to bear the fruits of the deeds performed during its embodied physical existence.*" These words explicitly point at the principle of rebirth which Sri Kaviraj fully endorsed. He writes again on page 381 that normally, when someone dies, the subtle self leaves the sheaths of physical existence and moves to the higher or lower direction in accordance with the actions performed while alive. It gets to different spiritual domains to face the consequences of one's doing and finally is sent back to the earth to complete the course of the remainder of the fruits of actions stored for him in the form of destiny. That is why coming back into the mother's womb becomes obligatory. This process alone is what we refer to as saṁsāra.

The foregoing is a complete description of the principle of rebirth. Later he elaborates as to how it is possible to be freed from the chain of birth and death. In this context, he enumerates four different kinds of liberation (mukti) – namely sālokya, sārūpya, sārṣṭi sāmīpya and sāyujya. He explains that with initiation (dīkṣā) from the guru, the self feels specially empowered with spiritual or divine qualities. For instance, the noble teacher may initiate an aspirant into the worship of Viṣṇu, arousing in him special powers of Viṣṇu such that he feels a special light of radiation within himself. This special light leads the aspirant towards the realm of Viṣṇu, the Viṣṇu-loka. During this period, no other deed can influence the self and it crosses the range in which his actions may have an impact on him. Thus the self ultimately goes to the Viṣṇu-loka.

Sri Kaviraj's views on rebirth and liberation both are of great value to us.

### *13. Acharya Vinoba Bhave*

In modern times, Vinoba Bhave has been a traditional yet independent thinker of India. In his article on "Punarjanma – anuman aur anubhava siddha hai", he says that there is much evidence in support of rebirth. It is as evident as this life itself.

If we accept that the true self is without beginning or end, then we shall have no problem in explaining what becomes of it after death. The problem is there as long as we think that before birth there was nothing, and that death is followed by a void.

When we are born of our parents, we feel happiness or unhappiness at times. If there was nothing before birth then how can we be responsible for our happiness or sadness? We commonly say that our miseries and woes are the outcomes of our own misdoings, but it would have no logical relationship with the position if there was nothing before birth and nothing left after death. This statement would also go against the law of karma.

In his book "Adhyatma tatva sudha", Vinoba cites the example of the Bengali language which was not native to him but which he picked up effortlessly. It was his belief that it indicated some previous connection for him with the language. He feels that rebirth makes life interesting and worth living. Each person is born out of the collective effects of the previous experiences. It is not proper to reject it just because this can not be proven in the laboratory. There is no need to give a complete proof of the theory, as for mature individuals a little proof is also equally meaningful.

These ideas taken from Bhave's book make his faith in rebirth completely unquestionable.

## Rebirth as found in Quran Sharif

The principle of rebirth finds expression in some of the sayings of the Quran, the holy book of Islam. They are taken from the commentaries on the Quran by Dharamveer Arya Musafir. Below are a few quotations:

के यूफ तक्फुरुन बिल्लाहे व
कुन्तुम् अम्वातन् फ अहयाकुम्

सुम्मु य्मीतकुम् सुम्म यो
हयीयकुम् सुम्म इलय हे तुर्जेऊन
[सुरते फातेहः मक्की रुकुअ ३ आयत ८]

*Why do you not believe in Allah? You were dead and he gave you life. You will die again. He will again give you life. Ultimately you will have to return towards him alone.*

अह्यातना वोद अमातना,
कुल् योह्यी हल्लजी अन्शा अहा अव्वल मर्रा

*He (the Lord Almighty) gave us life after we died. The One who gave us life in the past, He can also give us life in the future.*

युख्रिजुल् ह्य्या मिनल् मय्यती,
व युख्रिजुल् मय्यता मिनल् हय्यी

*The Lord alone severs life from us and throws us into the mouth of death, He alone takes us out of death's hands and throws us into the lap of life.*

या अय्योहल् इन्सानो इन्नका
कादिहुन् एला रब्बेका कादिहन्
फ मुलाकिहे लतर्कब्बुन्न तबकन् अन् तबक

*O Man! You have to go to your Lord, your Master. Cross these step after step and grade after grade, bowing down to him.*

मिन्हा खलकना कुम्, व फी हा नोई दुकुम्,
व मिन्हा नुखरुजुकुम्, एला तआरतीन् उखरा

*I have created thee, O man, out of clay, to that I shall make ye return. Again and again I shall bring you out of it till the end.*

सुम्मा ब अस्माकुम् मिन्बोद्
मौतेकुम् तअल्लकुम् तुष्कुरुन्

*Again I gave you birth after your death, that you may be grateful to me.*

(op. cit. Dr. Bhagwan Das Samanvaya, p. 253-254)

These statements from the Quran are meant for the non-believers who are exhorted to believe in the Lord Almighty. But these also bear clear evidence in support of the principle of rebirth.

## *The views of Western philosophers on rebirth*

Now we shall cite the views of Western philosophers, ancient and modern, on the subject of rebirth. Due to the unavailability of some of their original writings, we regret that we may be unable to cite them verbatim. However, the essential principles of their thinking have been collected from various sources, and these are presented here. In particular, extensive reference has been made to the book "Pashchatya darshanon ka itihaas" (*The History of Western Philosophy*), by Gulab Rai. The quotations are translated and paraphrased.

### *1. Pythagoras [581 B.C.]*

He is considered to be the earliest European philosopher who believed in transmigration. Historians date his existence around the sixth century B.C. None of his original writings are available today. Hence the knowledge of his doctrines is obtained from the statements of his various disciples such as Philolaudes. The Pythagoreans believe that the self is capable of transmigrating from one body to another. After a cycle lasting ten millennia, the universe becomes once again as it was. The fruits of actions performed here definitely have to be borne by each individual in the future. In this regard, the views of Pythagoras are quite similar to those of the Hindu systems of thought.

### *2. Empedocles [495 B.C.]*

He is known as the Kaṇāda (founder pf the Nyāya-Darśana) of the west. His thinking was quite similar to that of Kaṇāda's on the subjects of the soul, the senses and the atomic structure. He agreed with Pythagoras on the subject of transmigration.

### *3. Plato [428 B.C.]*

Plato was the chief disciple of Socrates. The history of western philosophical thinking revolves around Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. Even among these, the philosophy of Plato occupies a higher pedestal. He held the self to be immortal. He also believed in the transmigration of the self across physical bodies, as in past and future births. Indeed, the belief in transmigration is at the base of all his writings. He states, "*The self is extremely ancient compared to our bodies. It is reborn again and again.*"

In his work "Phoedo", he offers four arguments in support of transmigration. The first is that just as in the opposite pairs of growth and decay, good and evil and the sleep and waking states, so too the pair of birth and death stays continuously together. One is reminded of the Gītā that talks of "*Jātasya hi dhruvo mrityuḥ dhruvaṁ janma mṛitasya ca*". This argument of Plato is fully supportive of the concept of transmigration. In his second argument, Plato describes how the self is different from the physical body. He states that it is only the physical body that is destroyed at death, and the self which is eternal simply takes on a new body. In the same manner, Plato's third and fourth arguments too prove the same thesis, and it is quite evident from these that Plato was a believer in the concept of transmigration.

### *4. Philo [163 B.C.]*

Of Jewish origin, Philo was a great thinker of the Greek tradition. He believed in one ineffable God, complete in every respect, and untouched by qualities. According to his thinking, the bondage of the self is rooted in ignorance. When pure knowledge rises, the ignorance is dispelled and the self is set free. Otherwise the self has to take up many physical bodies in different births. The self gets entangled in sin through its physical associations, and it is this that serves to keep it in bondage.

Thus it appears that Philo was fully in agreement with the concept of transmigration.

### *5. Saint Augustine [352-429 A.D.]*

St. Augustine was the foremost genuine thinker of the middle ages in Europe. He held the body and the self to be absolutely different entities. On the relation between the body and the self, his view was that it could not be said as to how the two came to be associated with each other. But he felt with certainty that before birth the self had nothing to do with any body, though once having taken birth the self would not perish. It would be reborn again. Liberation is ultimately attained through the practice of love and devotion towards God, when the Lord's grace finally dawns.

Thus St. Augustine's views are quite close to the theory of rebirth.

### *6. Leibnitz [1643-1715 A.D.]*

According to Leibnitz, the universe is an amalgamation of monads that are nothing but consciousness. Consciousness is manifested in some of these monads, while it remains hidden in others. In the cases where it is manifested, we obtain the higher forms of the conscious monads which we refer to as human souls. The other monads where the consciousness is latent, we refer to as inert matter. One difference between the two is that in humans, there exists a central manifested conscious monad which acts as a coordinating, protective and controlling factor of all the other less developed monads. This is absent in the inert monads. Another difference is that the human monad has clear and indubitable knowledge of the self, while the others simply have instinctive awareness. The human monad is constantly undergoing change, and this change is what is known as life. Death is merely one particular state in this series of changes. Leibnitz considered these changes or new states to be subordinate to previous states. Thus, the state of death is subordinate to the earlier state of life, which in turn is subordinate to the death in the previous life. In this manner, Leibnitz agreed with the cycle of birth and death and the associated concepts of past and future births.

### 7. Schopenhauer [1785-1840 A.D.]

Arthur Schopenhauer was born in the German city of Denjik. In the entire history of Europe, one finds no other philosopher other than Plato to match his fine style of writing. Opposing philosophers such as Leibnitz and Hegel, he stated that will rather than knowledge is the essential nature of the self. Schopenhauer showed through various examples that will is at the root of the universe. As long as there is will or desire, so the world exists. Many people commit suicide thinking that thus they will be rid of the world. But it is their illusion – as long as desire exists, how can one be free of the world? These very desires to be free result in the creation of a new birth or a new body for man. Thus, Schopenhauer fully advocated the theory of rebirth while elaborating on his views.

### 8. Nietzsche [1844-1900 A.D.]

Nietzsche, the German philosopher who became known for his atheistic outburst '*God is dead*!' even he accepted rebirth. He has written that the life energies that are constantly transforming themselves are themselves limited, while time is limitless, unending. Therefore one has to accept that the forms that have come and gone, will certainly be reborn at some time in the future. From this, one can establish the cycle of karma purely from the angle of spirituality. He has also admitted that he reached this line of thinking through his personal intuitions.

### 9. Sir William James [1842-1910 A.D.]

William James is considered as one of the foremost philosophers of the USA. Religious and scientific influences are equally apparent in his thinking. He valued the truth underlying any doctrine solely on its utility or practicality. He kept himself open to both theistic and atheistic doctrines. Paraphrasing his words, "*Theism is a philosophy of hope and happiness. It is therefore the true and superior one. Atheism on the other hand drowns one in the ocean of despair. According to the atheistic viewpoint, this entire world is without purpose or any basis. Our lives will vanish like the mere bubbles in water, and all our life's practices such as charity, austerity, actions, prayer, etc. come to no avail. Pure atheism implies that there is no point in performing any activity, and one should merely sit by idly. For these reasons, atheism is mere falsehood.*" In this manner, Sir James supported theism whole-heartedly as well as the existence of a personal God, the concept of rebirth, and the existence of other worlds. Indeed, he was even a proponent of such ancient theories such as the existence of supernatural powers.

### *10. F.C.S Schiller*

After Sir James, Schiller was a great proponent of expansive humanism, even more so than of pragmatism. He was a supporter not only of modern scientific principles, but also ancient religious principles. He believed in the immortality of the self, and also shared in Sir James' belief in supernatural beings. He too admits acceptance of the existence of other worlds and in the validity of transmigration.

### *10. Sir Oliver Lodge*

*"We consider that after death our birth is certain."*

### *11. W.T.Jones*

*"The theory of transmigration teaches us that the self enters this life and body. This is not its new creation, rather from time immemorial it has existed on this earth as well as outside of it. From earlier traditions of transmigration we learn that the self is of the nature of God, knowledge and bliss."*

### *12. E.D.Walker*

*"It is quite improper to assert that the self has arisen out of the union of the parents' bodies, or that it has later been drawn from some other world by some special power."*

*"If one thoroughly investigates a man or a beast using the most advanced scientific instruments, one comes to realize that the self is beyond the capability of being created by man or mere physical elements alone. Rather, one would realize that the self was existent before this body's birth and it will exist after its death. It can never be destroyed."*

[Paraphrased from Ralph Schiller's "*Problem of Rebirth*"]

* * * * *

Though in the recent past, the west has been very much under the influence of the physical sciences, yet many of its fundamental presuppositions are being rocked by different discoveries. For example, we find that certain of Newton's laws are being contradicted by the theories of Einstein. As a result, today people are looking skeptically at knowledge established purely on physical or materialistic principles. The havoc and calamities created by the applications of science in the two world wars have led people to look for spirituality even in science. Among such people, we find those like J.S.Mackenzie supporting Brahmavāda, while others are moving away from materialism, atheism, pluralism and absolutism towards idealism, pantheism and relativism. The west today increasingly feels the need for faith in God, and is moving towards the belief in the immortality of the self and in transmigration.

In America, science has begun to look into the possibility of other worlds of the spirit. At the University of Virginia, according to Professor Dr. Ian Stevenson, head of the Neurological and Psychiatry departments, transmigration cannot be ignored by labeling it as mere superstition. Indeed, it is a truth and deserves a thorough investigation. While visiting India for the eighth time in 1972, Dr. Stevenson remarked that the findings of such investigation would be valuable in the diagnosis and treatment of certain diseases. He stated that he has encountered many cases of diseases that seem to continue from previous births. Frequently, children in India recount incidents from the previous life as they are not inhibited from discussing these. In Buddhist countries too, many useful incidents of transmigration have come to light. In these countries, it is easy to ascertain the validity of such incidents because of the elaborate descriptions provided by those able to recollect incidents of past lives. In many such cases involving children, one notices a high level of fear or emotion. Dr. Stevenson's finding was that in the majority of such incidents, the individual recounting his past life had died a violent or accidental death. In such cases, he associated the children's fear with the cause of death.

Dr. Stevenson visited Burma, Thailand, Lebanon, Turkey, Syria, Sri Lanka and many European countries while researching cases involving transmigration. He came to the conclusion through this research that there are no firm grounds for rejecting the concept of transmigration. In India alone he studied twenty cases of rebirth of which he verified seven cases by actually meeting the families of the past life. On average, he found a gap of three to five years from the time of a person's death to his next birth. In the majority of the cases, a person was born in the same land where he had died. However, exceptions to this were also found. In one case he found a child singing in a language with which his parents were not acquainted. Dr. Stevenson claims to have identified nineteen cases of rebirth in Sri Lanka and fourteen in Thailand.

Dr. Stevenson feels that evidence or indications of rebirth should be investigated at as early an age as possible, as a child begins to forget such incidents by the age of five or six, especially as he begins to go to school.

[Translated from an article printed in Aaj, October 24, 1972]

## *Psychology and the concept of transmigration*

Today, psychological studies and their development too are moving in the direction of spirituality. Psychological investigations have today increased the belief in the immortality of the self, and the faith in transmigration. On this subject, it is noteworthy to study the evidence provided by Sir Oliver Lodge in his book "Raymond", where his own son has given proof of his existence after death.

According to the principles of psychology, two factors are important in a child's psychological development – the child's inborn traits and its external environment. Of these, the inborn traits (its innate nature) influence the child through its entire life. That is to say, from the time of birth itself the child possesses its individual intellect, tastes and tendencies, which serve to develop its future psychological growth. This inborn nature, we can say with certainty, is obtained from its past life.

In the same manner, psychologists have recognized that living beings are guided by two kinds of behaviour associated with their inborn nature and their earned traits. Inborn tendencies are also of two kinds – natural reflexes and instincts. Reflex actions are predominant among lower creatures such as insects, while instincts are seen to dominate among higher animals. Even among humans, instincts play an dominant role in the early stages, though as the human being matures they take on the form of habits over time. Here too, among the basic instincts that form a part of the inborn tendencies, the effects of the tendencies from the past life are present.

Further, psychologists say that besides the fourteen basic instincts, the instincts to imitate, compete, control and empathize are also considered to be inborn tendencies. Though we shall not be examining each of these individually here, yet it is useful to mention here that these instincts do not come by accident. They are very much related to the child's previous life.

Some psychologists do believe that the inborn tendencies and innate nature are hereditary and come directly from the child's parents, rather than from any past life. But this position is not accepted by all psychologists, for two reasons. First, the union of the parents results in the creation of the physical aspects of the child, and not of its self or mind. It was this principle on the basis of which the well-known psychologist William James challenged the claims of scientists such as Huxley and Spenser that *'The individual self results from the transformation of the body or mind'*. He claimed instead that the self was a continual flow of the stream of consciousness, and quite different from the body. The second reason is that we do not find that a child necessarily displays all the traits of its parents, such as intelligence and courage. When similar traits are noticed, these could be said to environment-related, that is, they have been absorbed while growing up in the company of the parents.

## *Zoology and the concept of transmigration*

The principle of the evolution of species is an essential principle of zoology. Stanley Hall states that from the most insignificant germ to the highest form of civilized humanity, every stage is encountered numerous times by the individual being through its course of development. It is only after passing through all the lower forms that the human stage is reached. This is quite similar to the concept of transmigration whereby the self progresses or regresses by taking on higher or lower forms of life, in accordance with the actions performed by it.

## *True incidents of rebirth*

भाविताः पुर्वदेहेषु सततं शास्त्रबुद्धयः।
भवन्ति सत्त्वभूयिष्ठाः पूर्वजातिस्मराः नराः॥

[सुश्रुतः अ.१ श्लो.५६]

*Those who spent their past lives in perpetual study of the scriptures and were predominantly of a sāttvic disposition (i.e.*

*of a noble nature), they are the ones capable of remembering their past lives.*

रूपाद्धि रूपप्रभव: प्रसिद्ध:
कर्मात्मकानां मनस: मनस्त:।

[चरक:]

मनसो मनस्त इति – पूर्वजन्मन्यव्यवहिते
यादृङ्मन:, इह जन्मन्यपि तादृगेव मनो भवति।

[चक्रपाणिव्याख्या]

*As was the mind in the recent past life, so is the mind in this life too.*

If rebirth were merely a figment of imagination, then there would never have been any mention of recollection of past lives in the Āyurvedic sciences, nor would any example of such cases have been found. Even in western nations, since research began there into the cases of rebirth, many such incidents of rebirth have been identified spanning across the ages. Ralph Shirley has provided such examples in his book on rebirth, where in particular the cases of Alexandrina, Samona and Niriyark are remarkable and quite informative. Here in the following we shall be narrating a few incidents of recollection of previous lives.

Here is an extract on a case of rebirth, from the 26 August, 1949 issue of the Kāśī-based Hindi newspaper Sanmarga.

"Muradabad, 24 August. On the 15th of August, a five-year old boy named Pramod visited here from Visauli and astounded people by recalling incidents from his past life. He was able to describe the most mundane details from his past life. He was here for two days, during which he met literally hundreds of people including the city's most prominent citizens. The boy stated that he was called Paramananda in his past life, and he had been the brother of Mohanlal. Messrs. Mohanlal Brothers have branches of their firm in Saharanpur and Muradabad. On the 9th of May, 1943, while at Saharanpur he experienced severe pain in his stomach and he later expired.

On 15 March, 1944, nine and a half months after Paramananda's death, he was reborn as the son of Prof. Bankelal Sharma of the Intermediate College of Visauli. On growing up and being able to speak, he recounted that his firm was established in Saharanpur and Muradabad. One day he saw his relatives purchasing biscuits. This triggered a recollection that he had a large biscuit manufacturing establishment in Muradabad. He would thus recall many other things, and frequently insisted on being taken to Muradabad. By a strange coincidence, he had been given the same name Paramananda in this new birth too, and though his family affectionately called him Pramod, yet he would insist that they call him Paramananda. He also stated that he had his family in Muradabad, including his brother, wife and children. Over time, Sri Mohanlal, his brother from the past life, came to hear of him, and he invited the boy to visit him at Muradabad. Pramod made the trip by train. On disembarking from the train, he immediately recognized his brother and embraced him. On the way towards Sri Mohanlal's residence, he recognized various shops and buildings. On reaching the residence, he recognized the wife from his previous life. He recounted many incidents from the past life including many private matters. Later, an assembly was held at the regional Arya Samaj center, where his father from the current life Sri Bankelal Sharma narrated the full story in public.

This incident was also published by Dinanath Parekh in the Delhi-based Hindi weekly 'Navyug' on 11 September, 1949 [Year 17, Issue 37]. The editor added his comments as follows, "*The world's puzzles can not be solved by mere logic. The above article is not a figment of imagination. Rather, it is based on a confirmed and verified incident. It is in recent occurrence that an uneducated child's memory has raised such a challenge to those who ridicule the principle of transmigration*".

Here is the description of another incident that occurred in Delhi. Shanti, the daughter of Sri Rang Bahadur Mathur living in the Chirakhana locality, created quite a sensation when at the age of nine she recounted in great detail events of her past life. Stating that her earlier parents and family resided in Mathura, she expressed her desire to travel there. She confided in a retired principal of a local college Krishan Chandra, stating that her husband from the past life was a man named Kedar Nath. Krishan Chandra later located Kedar Nath in Mathura and informed him of this. Kedar Nath then traveled to Delhi with his son and second wife to meet her. When Shanti saw Kedar Nath, at first she was overcome with shyness, and then on seeing the son she began to weep. Later, Shanti was taken to Mathura, where she accurately identified various buildings including the house where she had lived with Kedar Nath in the previous life. On this trip, she was accompanied by her father, as well as the director of 'TejPatra' Lala Deshbandhu, Pandit Nekiram Sharma and others. Later, these gentlemen published a joint statement on the incident. Similarly, two other incidents have come to light recently in Basti and Bareilley, where two boys recounted incidents from past lives.

[Paraphrased from Kalyan, Year 10, Issue 6, Gītā Press]

Along the same lines, a story came up about a French girl recently, who without any study was able to speak in many different languages. Definitely this is a case of knowledge carried over from a past life.

On the subject of transmigration, there is yet another interesting incident that occurred recently and which will be of great use to describe. There is a small town named Chaumuhan in Mathura district. It lies on the Delhi-Mathura highway, about twenty km from the town of Mathura. There, a tragedy occurred on 6 March, 1965. The nine-year old daughter of a local resident Ladilisharan Agrawal, while collecting water from a well in order to perform oblations to Lord Śiva, slipped accidentally and fell to her death in the well.

Four years after this event, on 23 November 1969 the girl was reborn in Pasauli village [near Post Office Jeta] in the same district, as the daughter of Tejpal Pandit. At the early age of two and a half years, she began to speak strangely. Speaking to her mother, she said, "*You folks don't even drink tea in the morning, at my home everyone drinks tea in the morning.*" One day, she said in a similar vein, "*Mother, your house is not constructed well, while my house is built very well.*" On hearing this, the mother asked her where her other house was. The girl Nathiya replied that it was in Chaumuhan.

Nathiya frequently asked her mother to take her to Chaumuhan. But the mother used to brush her off by giving false assurances that it would happen. By a coincidence, one day the child was playing by her house when a resident of Chaumuhan, Sri Babulal, happened to visit. On seeing Sri Babulal, the child screamed, "*Grandfather, please take me to Chaumuhan.*" Stunned somewhat on hearing himself being addressed thus, Sri Babulal asked her where she wanted to go in Chaumuhan, and mentioned to her that he did not recognize her. The child firmly replied to this, "*But I recognize you. Your name is Babulal, and you are my grandfather.*" She added, "*I wish to visit Ladilisharan, he is my father.*" When Babulal asked her many questions about her past life such as her name, and how she died, she replied accurately on all accounts.

Babulal arrived at his home village and recounted everything to Ladilisharan. To satisfy his curiosity, Ladilisharan sent his son Kalicharan to Pasauli. On seeing him, the girl hugged him and recounted that at the time of her accident, he had been busy with his studies. Overcome with emotion at this reunion, the girl started weeping. Kalicharan offered assurances and returned to his village. On hearing his son's account, next Ladilisharan himself went to visit the child. On seeing him, the child again came up and hugged him. Both of them began to weep. Ladilisharan also asked a number of questions regarding events on the day of the tragedy, and the girl replied accurately to all of these. The girl was next brought to Chaumuhan, the village of her past life, where she correctly recognized and identified various individuals and buildings. Later, she went up straight to her home from the past life, and also recognized her past mother.

After four or five days, the people of Pasauli brought her back. Then again after a short while, she was brought to Chaumuhan by Kalicharan and she met with Ladilisharan's sister and brother-in-law. On seeing them, the girl immediately identified them and told them which village they resided in.

She was tested again by Ladilisharan who took her to her past school and asked her about some money she had taken on the day of the tragedy. She immediately held the hand of a lady teacher and mentioned that she had handed the fees to that individual. The teacher willingly confirmed this. She was also taken to her maternal grandparents' home, where she again correctly recognized her grandmother.

Ladilisharan next asked her where she had been since the time of the accident. The girl replied with all seriousness that for a while, she had spent time near the well itself. On a question as to what she ate while staying there, she answered that a mendicant or saint used to give her some bread, but that she did not remember any more details.

The extraordinary thing about this incident is that the child mentioned having spent up to four years after her death by the well, and eating food that was given to her – such information has never been received from other incidents of children recollecting past lives. This establishes the fact that after death, some time is spent in the form of spirit without any physical body.

[Paraphrased from Aaj, 25 March, 1973]

Though we find literally hundreds of such incidents, yet in order to establish the truth of transmigration our purpose is served by quoting a few cases. There is no added significance in referring to all of them, and therefore we shall stop here with these examples. If such examples were found in abundance across the world, then the concept of rebirth would be self-evident. There would be no special significance to the philosophy of India with regard to establishing the validity behind transmigration. And the religions of Islam and Christianity would not have conceived of the idea of Doomsday either.

In the following pages, we shall be evaluating the concept of transmigration on the grounds of its utility.

## *Usefulness of the concept of transmigration*

The theory of transmigration is a necessary and factual gift of Hindu thought to the world. It forms the basis of almost all of its doctrines such as theism and faith in a personal God, the existence of other realms such as heaven, the law of karma and the role of destiny. Let us consider theism first. If one were not to accept the theory of transmigration, then one could just as well not need God either. If men, animals, birds and plants were born once only, to be destroyed after death, then the physical union of men and women alone would explain man's existence, and similarly animals and birds too. The existence of plants would be explained as the union of seeds with the nourishing elements of the earth and water. There would be no need of a Creator God. Contrary to this line of thinking, if we were to accept the theory of transmigration, then the question arises that though the physical aspect of the human body comes from the union of the necessary elements from the parents' bodies, yet why is it that a spirit establishes a relationship with this new body? Under the principle of transmigration, one may answer the above question by stating that the self had performed various acts in a past life which have led it to this new life. The new life is for experiencing the fruits of past actions. And for this, one has to accept that it is God who directs the self to take on the new physical body. After all, why would the self voluntarily accept the sufferings associated with the taking on of a new body, as the fruit of a past sinful life? It is God who, without bias, is the dispenser of justice and who assigns the appropriate new bodies according to virtuous and sinful deeds committed in past lives. This is reflected in the statement below.

क्षिपाम्यजस्रमशुभानासुरीष्वेव योनिषु

[भ.गी. अ.१६, श्लो.१९]

The concept of other worlds such as heaven and hell are also closely related to transmigration. For if one believes that the self gets destroyed with the body at death, then who is there to go to heaven or hell?

The theory of karma is very closely tied to the concept of transmigration. Karma (actions yielding fruits) is considered to be of two kinds – dṛṣṭa janmavedanīya and adṛṣṭa janmavedanīya. Those actions that bear the fruit in this very life are of the first kind, while those whose results come in a future life belong to the second category. Those who do not accept the theory of transmigration accept only the first kind of karma, of which the consequences are experienced in this life itself.

Another categorization exists for karma according to those who believe in transmigration. As per this classification, actions may produce three kinds of results – first, birth in a higher or lower species; second, a long life or a brief one; and third, a life with good and happy circumstances, or one filled with sorrow. This categorization has been expressed by Patañjali in the sūtra below.

सति मूले तद्विपाको जात्यायुर्भोगाः

[योगसूत्र पाद २, सू.१३]

For those who believe in fate or destiny too there is a strong relationship with transmigration. This is not purely a matter of ridicule as some people seem to think.

पूर्वजन्मार्जितं कर्म दैवमित्यभिधीयते

As per the above statement, it is the actions of our past lives that we call fate in this life, and it is what results in a high or low birth, long or brief life, and a life filled with happiness or sorrow. The theory of destiny does not tell us to not make strenuous effort, or to merely throw up our hands in the air and depend purely on chance. But yes, it does instruct us to not feel envy at seeing others who are born in circumstances with more education, wealth or other such qualities. Rather, we would do better working industriously and making the best of the means and the circumstances that we have been born into, as a result of our actions of past lives. Thus, transmigration is an element of the Vedic philosophy which at one stroke resolves and reconciles many different concepts, without introducing any new contradictions.

Whereas belief in transmigration inspires man to rise to great virtuous heights, rejecting the concept leads with certainty to his decline. One who has faith in transmigration hesitates from committing sinful acts and is saved from them, as he fears having to face the consequences of these acts in the next life if not in this one. But one who does not believe in transmigration is not limited by such thinking, and so feels free to resort to falsehood, injustices, violence, stealing, etc. He is only concerned with making this life as pleasurable as possible, whatever the cost. It is thus that people say,

यावज्जीवेत् सुखम् जीवेद् ऋणं कृत्वा घृतं पिबेत्।
भस्मीभूतस्य देहस्य पुनरागमनं कुतः?।। इति।

[स.द.स. चा.द.]

To such people, I would like to ask as to why any one would ever exercise compassion or non-violence. What has he to benefit from the expenditure of his time and money in the service of others? What does one expect in return from a disabled or unknown beggar that one donates food and clothes to such people? Why would missionary saints work in homes of charity to serve the diseased, who once cured do not even return to thank their benefactors? Why do some people establish schools or free medical clinics for the education and well-being of others? All these noble deeds are done because they are intrinsically virtuous and will lead to obtaining merits for the next life. Those who do not believe in the next birth freely utilize the services of others but do not feel obliged to respond in kind. It is clear from the foregoing that faith in transmigration always inspires people to perform virtuous deeds, while absence of this faith in rebirth and in God permits one to feel free to commit acts of deception, injustice, violence and corruption.

Those who question the benefits of transmigration may pose the objection as to why we should accept that the fruits of actions are experienced in another life, rather than in this life itself. Thieves and dacoits and evil-doers are given punishments such as prison-terms and execution in this life itself by courts. What is the use of expecting that these evil acts will receive their just dues in another life or in the courts of another world?

In response to this objection, one may begin by stating that even these objectors accept that rewards or punishments should occur as per one's deeds. Suppose a man steals repeatedly, say ten times, without being detected. He gets caught on the eleventh occasion, for which he gets a punishment of two years rigorous imprisonment. But he never received any punishment for the first ten crimes. Had he been so punished for each of his crimes, he would have received two-year imprisonment terms for each such robbery. By thus getting punished on just the single occasion, the robber gets the message that getting caught itself is a crime, which should be avoided. Such thinking simply increases the tendency for committing sinful acts. The one infallible means to prevent this is for the public to have firm conviction in the theory of transmigration, which is the invaluable contribution of our culture to the world.

## *Transmigration and the newer theories of today*

In the following section, we shall discuss some newer theories created through an absence of faith in transmigration, and their actual and potential evil results. In so doing, we shall bring this entire work to its conclusion.

Transmigration is a part of that Vedic philosophy, which is one of the most ancient among the world's religions and which served to shed light where there was darkness before. It is because of this Vedic religion that the star of India has been shining for unknown millennia. Innumerable attempts were made by foreigners to extinguish this light of knowledge, but always these efforts failed. Even Buddhism, which originated in India and which is much more widespread and influential than the theories of today, was not able to thrive in India because of its opposition to the Vedic religion. I am of the opinion that all the modern theories such as Communism or Socialism, Nazism, Fascism, and modern imperialism too are outcomes of not believing in God and in rebirth in accordance with karma. Two of these theories, namely Nazism and Fascism, disappeared in the two Great Wars with Hitler and Mussolini. On Communism or Socialism, there is no doubt that despite an outward show of some attractive aspects, these too will lose their appeal in due course of time. Socialism and Communism are two names for essentially the same principle. They were conceived of by Karl Marx of Germany. He never had any place in his heart for faith in God, religion or rebirth, and he conceived of his new theory with the aim of ridding the world of these three.

Proponents of Marxism or Socialism identify three aspects to it – (i) philosophical, also termed as dialectical materialism, (ii) economic and (iii) political. Expounding on the philosophical aspect of his socialist theories, Marx stated, "*Till date, philosophy has served to explain the world. But now it has to work to transform it*". According to his thinking, humans are created and evolved according to the circumstances in which they exist. But being a part of that environment, they can be effective in influencing and transforming those circumstances. The world, according to his theory, is not operated by a universal, omnipotent God. Rather it is man himself who is the sole master and supporter of the world. This is Marx's theory of absolute materialism.

The reader is well aware of the evil consequences that the world faces today due to these materialistic views. Unrestrained by spiritual values, the physical sciences are today destroying the world in a manner similar to the destruction of Hiroshima, as though with Śiva's third eye. The same Communists who arrogantly dreamt of influencing and transforming the world are today fearful of the weapons of mass-destruction that they themselves created. The same Communists, refusing to operate as a puppet of a higher Being and proclaiming their own supremacy, are now working like robots in fields and factories under the control of others. Having acquired the wealth of others through looting, grabbing and violence, they are now fearful of being deceived by the greed of their own children. As a result of such materialism, one does not find compassion and goodness in the world today. This is indeed the result of the unrestrained philosophical view of Communism, which refuses to believe in the Vedic theories of karma, transmigration or faith in God.

We now take a look at the economic viewpoint of Communism. As per the Vedic theory of karma, man has a right to work, but the fruits are given by the Lord, who distributes these in accordance with the actions performed. Were it the case that the fruits too were in the control of man, then why would he bother with the necessary efforts required to obtain them? Thus it is said in the scriptures,

अक्के चेन्मधु विन्देत किमर्थं पर्वतं व्रजेत्।
इष्टस्यार्थस्य संसिद्धौ को विद्वान् यत्नमाचरेत्।। इति।

[सां.त.कौमुदी (सां.का.१)]

That is to say, if honey were to found at home itself, why would one bother to go to the mountain to search for it? If the desired result were to be obtained so easily, why would one bother to apply his intellect for it?

For those who believe in rebirth, the rule of receiving just fruits as per the actions performed is applicable both in this life and in the next. Even in this life we see that having toiled hard to achieve something, the benefits of the work go to someone else. In the Communist states this is the end result of all activity. Those who work in farms or factories have no power to touch a grain or a penny of what they produce other than what the government distributes to them. The Communist government certainly gets active in appropriating the wealth of others and distributing to everyone irrespective of their not having done anything to earn it. Quite likely, whenever thrifty and hard-working labourers and intellectuals produce wealth and thereby create an imbalance in society's balance of wealth, then the Communist governments will again have to take up the scales in order to measure and redistribute such created wealth. Communists do not believe that the individual should have control over his wealth that was created by his hard work and the Lord's grace.

It is a very basic rule of life that intelligent service, hard work, commerce and thrift serve to increase the wealth of individuals, and the reverse qualities, namely foolishness, indolence and wasteful spending lead to poverty. There are many examples of those who began without a shirt on their back, but became prosperous through diligence and hard work. There are also others who were very wealthy to begin with, and who later became penniless through laziness and carelessness. We see even in non-socialist states that those who wish to become wealthy by robbing others are sent to prison for their crimes and their wealth is returned to those from whom they stole it. Should we, in the same manner, consider those who become wealthy through industry and commerce as culprits? If so, then just as we consider an individual to be a culprit, so too we should consider the entire nation to be so. The Communist nations must admit their guilt first, and distribute their wealth and assets to other underdeveloped nations that do not possess the means of progress and development. But what is generally being practiced is contrary to the spirit of their own ideals. The Communist countries too indulge in the same lavishness and enjoy the same comforts that Capitalists do. They ignore the problems of poorer neighbouring nations. Not just that, they even encroach on their freedoms and exploit their weakness.

Another fundamental principle of Communism worth considering is that they de-personalize the systems of production, distribution and exchange. In production, man himself is one of the factors of production, so is he also to be made an impersonal property like other goods? If so, what happens to his freedom? This surpasses the final limits of bondage, and results in slavery as a result of the beast-like tendencies that have come into play. Is this the heightened form of society that the Communists wish to bring about? Where is the justice when the producer has no rights in distribution or exchange? Close observation reveals that not only does Communism fail to remove the defects of capitalism but it also adds the abuses of dictatorship. Thus this economic system results in the total obstruction of the people's moral growth. Such a system encourages dishonesty and reduces the inclination to work. The desirable humane qualities such as compassion, liberality, forgiveness etc. tend to vanish.

Proponents of such systems may object by saying that the above-mentioned humane qualities such as compassion and forgiveness are valued in precisely those societies composed of poor and unhappy people with criminal tendencies. But, claim the Communists, these evils have been destroyed at the very root from their Communist society. So why would there be any need for such virtues?

For the above claim to be valid, a necessary condition is that human society always remains complete and self-sufficient. But there do arise occasions for every man, when he does need kindness and liberality. Take for example the children and aged citizens of society. Is their life not dependent on governmental aid or the care and sympathy of young parents or grown-up children? Sometimes self-dependent and quite able young people may also need the help of others. To remove all class differences from this museum-like nature is like placing frogs on a measuring balance. The economic criterion is not the only basis for differentiating among people, and we find even in the Communist countries differences between the rulers and the ruled, the intelligentsia and the proletariat. How will these differences be removed? All must get similar facilities and comforts as per their system. But we find that if this was done and individuals were not rewarded for their individual contributions, then the nation would never prosper. And if such high-performing individuals were differentiated and rewarded, that would right away indicate the failure of the Communist ideology. It is man who makes society. If his individuality is disregarded, the ideal of a progressive nation would remain a mere dream.

One should however remember that unrestrained and total individuality as the Fascists and Nazis visualized is also harmful to society. Therefore, for the welfare of a nation or society, neither extreme of individuality or Communism is appropriate. It is a middle path that is needed, one that is untouched by the defects of either extreme, yet has the best characteristics of each. In the language of politics, we would term such a society as *Rām Rājya* (or the kingdom of dharma). This is the same as a democracy bounded by the rules of righteousness, an ideal state as sanctioned by the Vedas whose economic principles are guided by the fundamental law of karma extending across births, and the principle of transmigration.

The Marxist state and political system is also not free from defects. People from these countries prove to be more indisciplined and skeptical. Such characteristics eventually lead to the decline of the nation.

Gentlemen! In this section a somewhat elaborate critical assessment has been made of Communism. The reason is that today the gullible and unhappy public has come under its lethal influence and as a result is increasingly turning away from morality and virtue. Under the pretext of removing this materialistic toxin, the roots of Indian culture are being torn apart. The need of the hour is to prevent this and to establish the *Rām Rājya* or the kingdom of dharma by which the public's ignorance, misery, poverty and similar afflictions will be destroyed.

## *Conclusion*

Gentlemen! The concept of transmigration is such a principle which, if concealed, results not only in hiding from reality but also obstructing the path of progress of humanity. This is the reason that this principle, expounded in the Vedas, Upaniṣads, Gītā and Quran, supported by philosophers both ancient and modern and within India and abroad, and favoured by psychologists and other scientists because of their irrefutable logic, shines with truth with the radiance of the sun and the moon, and remains of high utility to mankind. There is no doubt that individuals and society stand to benefit tremendously from faith in its truth and utility. It is also certain that it would destroy the venomous environment of greed and bitterness spread by the new theories of today's Cārvākas or materialists. It would certainly prove to be a new fountainhead of kindliness, contentment, peace and duty-bound responsibility. It would thus solve many of the problems of our age.

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